

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

## Ivan Turgenev

Text of a speech read by P. P. Pekarsky on the occasion of a Shakespeare tercentenary celebration in St. Petersburg: a literary-musical festival arranged by the Society for Encouraging Literary Men and Scholars.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On April 23, 1564, just 300 years ago, in the year that Galileo was born and Calvin died, a child came into the world in a small town in central England whose obscure name was entered at the time in the register of the parish church—a name which has long since become one of the most illustrious among the greatest names of men: William Shakespeare.

He was born at the time when the sixteenth century was at the height of its power, a century rightly looked upon as very nearly the most significant in the history of European development; a century which was opulent in famous persons and in famous happenings, which saw Luther and Bacon, Raphael and Copernicus, Cervantes and Michelangelo, Elizabeth of England and Henry IV of Navarre.

In that same year, which we Russians are celebrating with all due impressiveness, there reigned over us in Russia—or in the kingdom of Muscovy, as it used to be called—the still youthful but already cruel-hearted Ivan the Terrible. That very year of 1564 witnessed the horrors and the executions which preceded the massacre of Novgorod; but that year, too, signalled, as it were, the birth of the greatest writer by the establishment of the first printing press in Moscow.

The terrible things committed at that time were not peculiar to Russia alone, however. Eight years after the birth of Shakespeare Paris experienced the St. Bartholomew Night massacre, and the dark shadows of the Middle Ages lay over the whole of Europe. But already the dawn of a new epoch was beginning, and the poet who appeared in the world at that time was the most perfect exponent of the new principle which has been at work in the world ever since, and which is destined to create anew the entire structure of social life—the principle of humanity, kind-heartedness and freedom.

We Russians are celebrating this anniversary for the first time; but in this respect the other peoples of Europe have nothing to boast of. When the first century after the birth of Shakespeare had passed, his name had been almost completely forgotten even in his own native land. England had then just emerged from the power of the republicans and the Puritans, to whom the dramatic art was a corruption and who proscribed stage performances. But the restoration of the theatre in the days of Charles II had nothing in common with the pure spirit of Shakespeare—it was totally unworthy of him. In 1764, two centuries after his birth, England had learned to understand her poet and to be proud of him. Lessing directed his fellow countrymen to him, Uhland translated him, while the youthful Goethe, the coming creator of *Goetz*, was reading him with reverence. For all that, his fame had not penetrated to the masses of the people. It had not passed beyond the bounds of the educated section of literary circles. In France, hardly anyone, with the exception of Voltaire, knew him, and Voltaire extolled him as a barbarian. As for Russia, what are we to say? The reign of Catherine was just beginning, and the actor Sumarokov was thought of as our supreme tragedian.

And now another 100 years have gone by, and what are we witnessing? It is no exaggeration to say that this day is being celebrated, or reference is being

made to it, in every part of the world. The name of Shakespeare is being uttered with love and gratitude in the remotest regions of America, Australia and South Africa, in the forests of Siberia, on the banks of the sacred rivers of Hindustan, and throughout the whole of Europe. It is uttered in palaces and in cabins, in the brilliant drawing rooms of the wealthy and in the cramped dwellings of working people, in places near home and places far away, in the soldier's tent and in the trader's booth, on land and at sea, in family circles and in the abodes of the unmarried, by people of success, to whom it brings pleasure, and by people who have failed, to whom it brings consolation.

He has conquered the world. His conquests are more durable than those of the Napoleons and the Cæsars. Every day new subjects of his come flowing in like tidal waves, and every day these human waves spread wider and wider. No other figure has grown as large during the past 100 years as has that of Shakespeare, and there will be no end to the increase of his stature. How many editions of his works have appeared, and in how many different languages, during the last 100 years? How many artists, painters, sculptors and musicians have embodied his characters and have been inspired by them? And how many such are there still to come? How many future generations, how many tribes of whom we know little at present, how many dialects which are now mere gibberish, will join the triumphant procession of his fame? It is his third centenary that we are celebrating, but we may look forward with perfect confidence to the festival of his millenary. Indeed, just as Homer, his only rival, the supreme poet of the ancient world, who having reached his third millenary still shines with the splendour of immortal youth and unfailing power, the supreme poet of the modern world was created for eternity and will abide for ever!

We Russians who are celebrating the memory of Shakespeare have a right to do so. For us Shakespeare is not just a resounding and glorious name to which we pay reverence at a distance and on rare occasions; to us he has become something that we ourselves have achieved. He has passed into our very flesh and blood. Go into any theatre when one of his plays is being performed (I would mention, in passing, that only in Germany and Russia are they never out of the repertoire)—go into any theatre and scan the ranks of the gathered throng; look at their faces; listen to their judgments; and you will feel quite sure that before our very eyes a vital and intimate intercourse is proceeding between the poet and his audience; that the characters he has created are familiar and dear to everyone; that the wise and just utterances which came from the treasury of his all-comprehending soul are understood and well known to everybody. Surely the character of Hamlet is better known and understood by us than, say, by a Frenchman, or, to go even farther, by an Englishman! Has not that character been joined for us in an inseparable bond with the memory of the great Russian—I say Russian—actor Mochalov? Do we not earnestly welcome every attempt made to set the creations of Shakespeare before us in sounds that are native to us? And, finally, is it possible that there should be no bond of fellowship between the most merciless, and yet, like old Lear, the all-forgiving, comprehender of the human heart—between the poet who more than all others and deeper than all others penetrated the mysteries of life and a people whose chief distinguishing mark has hitherto been an almost unequalled thirst for self-awareness and a tireless pursuit of self-understanding; a people, too, that has not been lenient to its own frailties and yet has forgiven them in others; a people that, when all is said, has not been afraid to expose those very frailties to the light of God, any more than Shakespeare was afraid to expose the dark sides of the soul to the light of poetic truth, that light which at the same time both illumines and cleanses them?

Are we now to say something about Shakespeare himself? Are we to attempt

to give, as far as we are able, in a hasty and necessarily brief outline, an appreciation of his genius? That is scarcely possible, or even necessary—all the more so as Shakespeare himself will now be speaking to you.

Like nature, Shakespeare is accessible to everybody, and like nature everyone must himself study him. As nature is simple and many-sided, so too is Shakespeare—all spread out before your eyes, on the palm of your hand, so to say, and yet all unfathomably deep; free, demolishing all shackles and yet perfected by an inward harmony, by an undeviating law, by a logical necessity that lies at the root of all life.

Therefore let us limit ourselves to mentioning one of his sayings which he applied to Brutus, who is well-nigh one of his purest creations:

‘ . . . Nature might stand up

And say to all the world “ This was a man! ” ’

Shakespeare could not find a more powerful expression with which to pay tribute to vanquished virtue. Let that same expression be the highest tribute we reverently render to the triumphant genius!

*S. Peterburgskie vedomosti, 24.4.1864.*

Translated by the late Edward Bernstein, from *Voprosy literatury*, 1954.

## SHAKESPEARIAN LANDSCAPES

Grigory Kozintsev

ON A VISIT to England some time ago it was my good fortune to make the acquaintance of old houses and castles connected with Shakespeare and preserving his memory; but mingled with these there arose in my mind's eye imagined landscapes which the poetry of Shakespeare and the testimony of his contemporaries had traced there long before. Sometimes the reality corresponded with the work of the imagination, sometimes not. And the title of this article must not be taken to suggest a limitation to landscape as such; there were various objects, portraits, pieces of statuary. . . .



WE ARE in one of the rooms of the library of the British Museum. As a producer, working on the tragedies of Shakespeare, I am naturally interested in seeing, while in England, a first edition of the plays. The assistant carefully places a book on the lectern.

‘ I felt you would not get a proper impression if I merely showed you this edition in the museum display, in a glass case’, he had said, and then—‘ You must not merely look at it, but handle it. I will leave you alone with it.’

Before me was one of the greatest of bibliographical rarities, a first edition of Shakespeare's works, a folio.

Shakespeare died in 1616. His will was detailed: there is even mention made of a second-best bed but, withal, no mention of his writings. A dramatist's manuscripts at that time rarely presented any interest of themselves. His plays were the property of a company of players. Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies belonged to a theatrical syndicate. No patrons of art, no scholars, preserved his achievement. Two actors, fellow workers in the exacting business of the stage, companions, toilers such as he was, collected together the text of thirty-six plays. John Heminge and Henry Condell, explaining the intention of the edition, found words of dignity. They had been drawn to their task, they



wrote, not by ambition of self-profit, but only, 'to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend Fellow aliue, as was our SHAKESPEARE.'

I am alone with this book. I open the leather-bound cover. The darkened, ancient paper, the deep dark print: this is one of the first from the presses.

'Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. . . .'

Under the title an engraving, by the Dutch artist Droeshout. Against a dark background the features of a man with large tranquil eyes. Who, then, is this man? The author of immortal works, or merely the figment of the artist? Ben Jonson, in verses dedicated to Shakespeare's memory, enjoined the reader to 'looke Not on his Picture, but his Booke.'

How good it was to have been able to make acquaintance with the folio in just such a way as I had, in an empty room of the library, with this edition in my hands! But how much more difficult to 'handle' the life reflected in its pages.



DOWN TWISTS and turns stand little hostelryes—inns, alehouses, pubs, with signboards on brackets. The oak beams, the wrought-iron trellis-work, the signs on the brackets—the Saint George, the Unicorn, the Red Lion, the Swan—seem to recall the passers-by to the times of Shakespeare. Green double-decker buses go by, expensive cars like streamlined aerial torpedoes, and an old Ford, unhurriedly: an elderly lady with outsize spectacles sits at the wheel. The twentieth century drives past the sixteenth on its comfortable asphalt surface. The sixteenth century reconditioned and enamelled, washed and smoothed to a starched gloss, and as appetising as the wrapper on a bar of chocolate.

The river is tranquil, as are the trees bending to the water. A boat glides along—Shakespeare's birthplace.

We are not allowed to forget this. One cannot finish an omelette without revealing his portrait, and he adorns the heading of the menu, and the ashtrays.

'Do you strain your nerves to breaking-point', admonishes an advertisement in a brochure devoted to the Memorial Theatre, 'grappling with Shakespeare? In Stratford you can recuperate from Othello and Lear. . . .'

And the therapy?

The advertisement continues: 'A mere ten minutes after the performance and you are in the — hotel—the menu is as full of variety as a Shakespeare soliloquy.'

'Would you care to do the short way round?' inquires the custodian of the house in which Shakespeare was born. Evidently a technique of accelerated museum-doing has been perfected. We go the 'long way round' in the little house. The custodian is a cultured man who loves his work, and it is a pleasure to talk with him. He shows the collection as simple, everyday objects. The simplicity of these things should be borne in mind. We producers, staging Shakespeare, too often tend to imagine him as having dwelt in marble halls.

In the garden are growing the trees and flowers mentioned in Shakespeare's verse. Each summer the gay colours are aflame, the scents float on the air, and once again Ophelia's coronet is woven. There's rosemary—that's for remembrance; and there's pansies—for thoughts. . . . Out of the house—the garden as yet innocent of all these flowers—steps a youth, a provincial on his way to seek his fortune. Legends arise about him, unverifiable, apocryphal. But from his contemporaries' accounts and indeed from his own words we know that he lived in wild times. The death-knell was tolling: from village to village ran the Black Death. Men's hands were lifted against one another. There was talk of revolt. Conspirators hedged the throne. . . .

In the inn-yard the coachmen's lamp gleams yellowly. 'The most villainous

*house in all London road for fleas; peas and beans are as dank here as a dog; they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we leak in your chimney. . . .*

It is pleasant to drive comfortably along past the realm of good Queen Bess, all furnished new for tourists. But the tidy sixteenth century, this neat little picture from a child's album, disappears before the sudden memory of the rough directness of Shakespeare's words.



**P**ERCHED ON long staves, the rotting heads of criminals overlooked London Bridge. The boats plied on the Thames, and there on the far bank stood high towers, sloping towards their tops. An old engraving of a view of London supplies inscriptions with the information that one of these buildings was 'the Bear Garden,' and the other 'the Globe'. In the one, dogs baited the bear; and in the other, Shakespeare trod the boards and his plays were acted. The theatre was open to the sky. William Shakespeare, a man of the Lord Chamberlain's company, worked with his troupe for more than twenty years. Together with his companions he toiled the whole year round, acting in the afternoon, often writing and rehearsing at night. The actors spoke the words which he had written, and were hemmed in on three sides by the audience, by clouds of tobacco smoke, by pedlars with things to eat and drink and by people playing cards. But when Iago was telling of Desdemona's unfaithfulness, or Hamlet spoke with Ophelia, the eating and the card-playing ceased.

It was a time of great changes, and it is a mistake to consider these spectators obtuse and unreceptive. Shakespeare was sensible of these changes just as were numbers of his contemporaries—only these people could not give articulation to their fears and feelings of anger, while he could. In the absurd tower without a roof raged all the tempests of the age.

At the end of April 1616 Shakespeare passed away. His coffin was borne to the Church of Holy Trinity, and in this church on the north wall stands a wooden effigy. An artisan from London hacked out to order the bust of a portly individual with bulging eyes and stiff upsprung mustachios. In the hand of his subject he thrust a goose-quill—the gentlemen giving the order had indicated that the deceased was a writer. For added dignity the paper on which he was writing was placed on a cushion with tassels.

Thus death clawed him in its clutch, beginning with an absurd, rough-hewn piece of provincial trumpery. Wood afterwards gave way to marble. In Westminster Abbey there stands a marble gentleman which they say is Shakespeare. . . .



**I**N THE Tate Gallery are several pictures devoted to Shakespearian subjects. In 1852 Millais represented a beautiful damsel immersed in a beautiful brook: *The Death of Ophelia*. A dear little bird with a yellow breast seems to twitter away, and one knows that such a fowl can chirrup no other way but musically and with refinement of taste. Ford Madox Brown, a contemporary of Millais, has a slumbering old man clutching a little floweret, and a lady in a cloak of repulsive rosy hue stretches out her hand towards him in the presence of musicians and grave-faced spectators—and according to the catalogue this is *Lear and Cordelia*. *Hamlet and Ophelia*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, shows us a dim, dead world.

These Pre-Raphaelites hated bourgeois civilisation and its soullessness, and the call went out for 'fidelity to nature'. But the revolt, having arisen in the salons, was powerless to get outside these limits. This art changed nothing but the appearance of bourgeois drawing rooms. Most especially did this outlook have nothing to do with Shakespeare. I imagined these mannered figures on the boards of the Globe, and distinctly heard a stream of Elizabethan abuse.



THE REASON for the absence of scenery in the Shakespearian theatre was not the lack of funds or dearth of imagination. Luxurious theatrical appointments enchanted the people of the time, and the stagings of masques were ingenious enough. It was a question not of the sparseness of theatrical equipment, but of the perfection of the poetry. The future was to demonstrate that technical innovations and inflation of expense were of themselves small help to Shakespeare. The luxurious spectacles of the last century, the productions of Charles Kean, in which crowds of supernumeraries milled about against a background of views of old London, merely served to obscure the poetry. On the modern stage it is not difficult to fabricate a dawn, but it is not so easy to state by mechanical means that

'. . . morn, in russet mantle clad  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.'

The Stratford Memorial Theatre recalls this quality in Shakespeare's poetry of being able to stand up by itself.

I had been rather put out by the fact that it was a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that it had been arranged I should see there. I could not easily conjure up the conventional fantastic forms and characters: tradition got in the way, the memory of illustrated editions, the music of Mendelssohn, pastoral lovers, and ballet elves. However, the producer succeeded in putting over the character of the vision. The fairies were authentic, such as a child might imagine. There lived on that stage at one and the same instant both a poetic and a real world of rustic sprites: they were not apparitions hovering in an attenuated aery domain, but *domovye*.

In the interval I went out on to the balcony. On the roof, floodlit, was fluttering a yellow pennant, showing a lance and a falcon, Shakespeare's coat of arms and the emblem of the Memorial Theatre. Not long previously this pennant had hung over the entrance to theatres in Moscow and Leningrad, just as in London there had appeared a curtain with a seagull. An excellent thing, when nations are drawn together under the banner of an art whose devices are the falcon of Shakespeare and the seagull of Chekhov.

On the far bank of the Avon the street-lamps glitter through the trees. Swans are floating on the dark water. I shall have to be setting out early tomorrow morning. In execrable English I bid the swans goodbye and without a backward turn of their necks they glide away.

Oktyabr.

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE USSR.—Continued from page 9

### The Taming of the Shrew (39)

Orenburg; Tartu, in Estonian; Kirov; Krasnodar; Ashkhabad; Leningrad, at the Leningrad Drama Theatre by Tutushkin; Nalchik, in Kabardin; Stavropol; Pyarnu, in Estonian; Tambov; Kishinev; Kalinin; Semipalatinsk; Tashkent; Ordzhonikidze; Odessa; Abakan; Kamensk-Uralsky; Tomsk;

Orel; Poti, in Georgian; Blagoveshensk; Nikolaev; Sverdlovsk; Chita; Kuibyshev; Astrakhan; Noginsk; Taganrog; Stalingrad; Tallin; Magnitogorsk; Omsk; Moscow, at the Railwaymen's Central House of Culture by Rudnik; Saratov; Moscow, at the Central Theatre of the Soviet Army by Popov; Bryansk.

*Where no language is indicated the production was in Russian*

## SHAKESPEARE IN THE USSR, 1945-57

It would be too bold and too presumptuous to put Shakespeare before all the other poets of humanity, as a poet; but as a dramatist he is now without a rival whose name could be coupled with his.

—V Belinsky.

**N**OWHERE OUTSIDE the English-speaking world will the 400th anniversary of the birth of Shakespeare be celebrated more widely than in the USSR. Shakespeare has become a part of Russian literature and culture. As our article by the great nineteenth-century novelist Turgenev—on the occasion of the 300th anniversary—says, Shakespeare had already found a second home in Russia by the middle of the nineteenth century. The conquest was swift and complete. It began in the eighteenth century with N. M. Karamzin's translation of *Julius Caesar* (1797). To Karamzin, Shakespeare was the 'friend of nature', the master of the 'innermost secrets of man'. Pushkin, Belinsky, Dobrolyubov and Tolstoy found inspiration in him. Mochalov, the great Russian tragedian, created a whole gallery of Shakespearian roles at the Moscow Maly Theatre; his Hamlet, full of revolutionary romanticism, began a Russian tradition.

Since Turgenev's day, the assimilation of Shakespeare has continued, and spread to other languages spoken in the USSR, and to other arts. Great talents have been attracted to translating him—in our own time Boris Pasternak, Samuel Marshak and T. Shchepkina-Kupernik. Composer after composer has found inspiration in his poetry: Chaikovsky, Prokofiev, Kabalevsky, Shebalin, Machavavadze. Artists like Favorsky have been drawn to visualise his characters. Choreographers and dancers—Lavrovsky, Chabukiani, Ulanova—have translated *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* into dance.

Every Soviet theatre aspires to put on Shakespeare. Each year a company of actors has the exciting experience of performing one of the plays for the very first time in its native language. In the first dozen years after the war, from 1945 to 1957, there were 303 different productions, in a dozen languages, in professional theatres from Klaipeda in the west to Alexandrovsk-on-Sakhalin in the east (for a detailed list see below). The legion of producers swells; in Soviet times it has included Stanislavsky, Tairov, Popov, Khmelyov, Rapoport, Zavadsky and Okhlopov in Moscow alone. The list of Shakespearian actors is almost endless: the Russians Mochalov, Shchepkin, Adamyan, Lensky, Yermolaeva, Yuzhin, Kachalov, Leonidov, Ostuzhev, Koonen, Reuben Simonov, Maretskaya, Samoilov; the Georgian Khorava; the Yiddish actor Samuel Mikhoels; the Armenian Papazian; the Estonian Karm; and a host of others. In this year the names of the British actors who played Shakespeare in his own tongue in the USSR will be recalled again and again: Paul Schofield, Dorothy Tutin, and others. But also honoured and recalled by the oldest generation will be the name of Gordon Craig, the memory of whose work with the Moscow Art Theatre over fifty years ago is still passed on by those who worked with him.

### Anthony and Cleopatra (4)

Tbilisi, in Georgian; Tallin, in Estonian; Leningrad; Sverdlovsk.

### Merry Wives of Windsor (5)

Riga, in Lettish; Chernovitsy, in Ukrainian; Tartu, in Estonian; Gorky; Moscow, by Zavadsky.

### Hamlet (14)

Tallin, in Estonian; Vitebsk, in Belorussian; Tashkent, in Uzbek; Leningrad, by Kozintsev; Daugavpils; Petrozavodsk; Moscow, by Okhlopov; Kharkov, in Ukrainian; Novosibirsk; Batumi, in Georgian; Kaluga; Lvov, in Ukrainian; Perm; Frunze.

## **Two Gentlemen of Verona (6)**

Saratov; Leningrad, at the New Theatre by Weisbrem; Moscow, at the Vakhtangov Theatre by E. Simonov and the Shchepkin Theatre School by Polonskaya; Yaroslavl; Perm.

## **Twelfth Night (41)**

Simferopol; Gorky; Minsk; Moscow, at the Maly Theatre by Vladichansky; Grozny; Odessa, in Ukrainian; Baku, in Azerbaijani; Novosibirsk; Alma-Ata; Sverdlovsk; Kiev, in Ukrainian; Tbilisi, in Georgian; Yaroslavl; Yoshkar-Ola; Leningrad, at the Pushkin Theatre by Vivien; Petrozavodsk; Kirov; Rostov-on-Don; Voronezh; Riga, in Lettish; Kurgan; Kovrov; Kaluga; Moscow, at the Art Theatre Studio-School by Massalsky; Simferopol; Komsomolsk-on-Amur; Biisk; Saratov; Moscow, at the Moscow Drama Theatre by Bortko; Khabarovsk; Klaipeda; Cheremkhovo; Baku, in Azerbaijani; Ordzhonikidze, in Ossetian; Krasnodar; Bugulma; Kustanai; Uzhgorod, in Ukrainian; Moscow, at the Art Theatre by Stanitsyn and Massalsky; Abakan, in Khakass.

## **A Winter's Tale (2)**

Kirovokan, in Armenian; Baku, in Azerbaijani.

## **As You Like It (3)**

Tallin, in Estonian; Liepaya, in Lithuanian; Leningrad, at the Theatre of Comedy by Selektor.

## **A Comedy of Errors (13)**

Novosibirsk; Maikop; Leningrad, at the New Theatre by Weisbrem; Moscow, at the Theatre of Satire by Krasnyansky; Yoshkar-Ola, in Marii; Kuibyshev; Erevan, in Armenian; Penza; Komsomolsk-on-Amur; Krasnoyarsk; Kazan; Novgorod; Tashkent.

## **All's Well that Ends Well (1)**

Daugavpils.

## **King Lear (16)**

Kazan, in Tatar; Tallin, in Estonian; Tbilisi, in Georgian; Ordzhonikidze, in Ossetian; Kemerovo; Minsk; Erevan, in Armenian; Bryansk; Kaluga; Ufa; Riga; Kurgan; Stalınabad, in Tajik; Volsk; Serov; Balakhna.

## **Richard III (1)**

Tbilisi, in Georgian.

## **Macbeth (2)**

Moscow, at the Maly Theatre by Zubov and Velikhov; Riga.

## **Measure for Measure (2)**

Tartu, in Estonian; Kalinin.

## **Much Ado about Nothing (22)**

Yaroslavl; Tula; Riga, in Lettish; Stalınogorsk; Leningrad, at the Gorky Theatre by Shlepyanov; Simferopol; Sverdlovsk; Artem; Ordzhonikidze, in Ossetian; Sukhumi, in Georgian; Perm; Liepaya, in Lithuanian; Archangel; Riga; Tomsk; Voronezh; Syktyvkar; Kharkov; Odessa; Dnepropetrovsk, in Ukrainian; Tambov; Tula.

## **Othello (78)**

Komsomolsk-on-Amur; Ufa, in Bashkir; Yoshkar-Ola; Nakhichevan, in Azerbaijani; Makhachkala, in Kumyk; Barnaul; Kirovakan, in Armenian; Krasnoyarsk; Simferopol; Tbilisi, in Georgian; Mogilev; Semipalatinsk; Michurinsk; Orel; Tbilisi, in Armenian; Echmiadzin, in Armenian; Magnitogorsk; Chernovitsy, in Ukrainian; Baku, in Azerbaijani; Kaluga; Tallin, in Estonian; Borisoglebsk; Sukhumi, in Abkhazian; Tomsk; Frunze, in Kirghiz; Voronezh; Petrozavodsk; Samarkand; Serov; Astrakhan; Vladimir; Tula; Ordzhonikidze, in Ossetian; Mukachevo; Omsk; Cheremkhovo; Bryansk; Dnepropetrovsk, in Ukrainian; Vilnius; Yaroslavl; Kharkov, in Ukrainian; Riga, in Lettish; Archangel; Irkutsk; Khabarovsk; Smolensk; Tambov; Zlatoust; Sumy, in Ukrainian; Kamenets-Podolsk, in Ukrainian; Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk; Gorky; Pavlodar; Taldy-Kurgan, in Korean; Sterlitamak; Kazan, in Tatar; Karshi, in Uzbek; Chelyabinsk; Ashkhabad, in Turkmen; Odessa; Grozny; Sevastopol; Berezniki; Kudymkar; Chita; Namangan, in Uzbek; Ivanovo; Voroshilov; Ryazan; Sukhumi, in Abkhazian; Magadan; Yakutsk, in Yakut; Buinaks, in Avar; Samarkand, in Uzbek; Sukhumi, in Georgian; Erevan, in Armenian; Kutaisi, in Georgian.

## **Romeo and Juliet (50)**

Chelyabinsk; Andizhan, in Uzbek; Minsk, in Belorussian; Kuibyshev; Alexandrovsk-on-Sakhalin; Kustanai; Voronezh; Stalınabad, in Tajik; Kursk; Leningrad, at the Theatre of the Young Spectator by Weisbrem; Simferopol; Frunze; Tbilisi, in Georgian; Dzerzhinsk; Tbilisi, Irkutsk; Omsk; Ivanovo; Pensa; Barnaul; Krasnoyarsk; Gorky; Nikolaev, in Ukrainian; Yoshkar-Ola, in Marii; Tashkent, in Uzbek; Saratov; Kirov; Moscow, at the Regional Drama Theatre by Golubovsky; Vladimir; Krasnodar; Nalchik, in Kabardin; Vladivostok; Borisoglebsk; Novosibirsk; Serov; Rybinsk; Tashkent; Riga, in Lettish; Orel; Astrakhan; Kiev; Pskov; Syzran; Tula; Izhevsk; Klaipeda, in Lithuanian; Minsk, in Belorussian; Yakutsk, in Yakut; Moscow, at the Vakhtangov Theatre by I. Rapoport; Orenburg.

## **A Midsummer Night's Dream (4)**

Ulan-Ude, in Buryat; Tartu, in Estonian; Riga, in Lettish; Ust-Kamenogorsk.

# THE MOUSETRAP

A Tragedy

Alexander Khazin

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HAMLET, hero of Shakespeare's work of that title.

CLAUDIUS IVANOVICH TIMOFEEV, author of a textbook of literature for secondary schools.

GERTRUDE, the queen, from the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.

OPHELIA, a weapon in the hands of the Venetian aristocracy.

POLONIUS, father of the weapon, and representative of the court nobility.

FORTINBRAS, representative of the epoch of the Renaissance.

ROSENKRANTZ }  
GUILDENSTERN } representatives of reaction.

THE GHOST, representative of other-world reality.

Actors—LARISSA, bearer of the rueful features of Russian reality.

KARANDYSHEV, spokesman of the ambitions of petty officialdom.

NINA, representative of love.

ARBENIN, carrier of jealousy.

*Night. By the light of the moon are seen the gates of Okhlopkov's Hamlet at the Mayakovsky Theatre. At the gates are Hamlet and Polonius.*

Hamlet : How now, has this marvel appeared today ?

Polonius : If so, I have not seen it.

*Enter the Ghost.*

Hamlet : Hush ! Marry ! Look—there it is again !

Ghost : What cost these gates ?

Polonius : Eight hundred thousand !

Ghost : O-o-o.

Hamlet : There is no doubt ; it is my father's shade.

Ghost : You are mistaken. No, Hamlet, no, oh, no !

I am the shade of classical literature.

I am the pallid ghost of all its heroes.

Condemned to wander for a certain time

In textbooks for the senior forms of schools.

Into my corner stole Timofeev, O, oh !

With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,

And in the porches of mine ears did pour

A liquor distilled from schemata and generalisations.

O horrible ! O horrible ! most horrible !

If indeed thou hast ever loved literature

Revenge this foul murder . . .

*Cut. Lights up immediately.  
On stage, Hamlet and Polonius.*

Hamlet : How now, my lord, does the author of the textbook wish to see this play ?

Polonius : He does, and so do they<sup>1</sup> at the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences—and as quickly as possible.

Hamlet : Then tell the actors to hurry.

*Exit Polonius.*

Hamlet : O heavens ! There is no more terrible sin ! To murder classic heroes before the eyes of all humanity ! I gaze upon myself in the mirror and know me not. Am I Hamlet, or am I a representative ? . . . Away with this folly ; let me tell them the mother-truth.

*Trumpets. A Danish march. Enter in the costumes of a king and a queen, arm in arm, the author of the textbook and the woman-representative—with them Ophelia and the royal suite. Torches.*

King : How fares the product of the age, Hamlet ?

Hamlet (*with bitter irony*) : Believe me, excellently ! Since I was converted into a product through Your Majesty's fault, I have become perishable.

Ophelia : O, my lord !

King : That is an answer without relevance, Hamlet.

Queen : Come hither, my dear representative, sit by me.

Hamlet : No, mother, you had already forgotten me somehow at Uchpedgiz,\* and I have returned thence quite maimed. (*To Ophelia*) Lady, may I lie in your lap ?

Ophelia : Ay, my lord, you and I together will strip bare the features of feudalism.

Hamlet : It is unseemly when a modest girl strips bare.

Ophelia : Heavenly powers, heal him !

Hamlet (*with a mad laugh*) : And does it seem to you that you are even more fascinating, Ophelia ? . . . A fig on it ! You too are a product ! We are all products, that are brought to the table for authors of textbooks. Look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and she but poisoned a whole tenth class within's two hours . . .

King : My prince, you invited us to watch some play. Do you know its argument ? Is there no offence in it ?

Hamlet : No, no. Millions of schoolchildren study its heroes. And if they do not go mad from tedium, it is the result of their iron constitutions.

King : What do you call the play ?

Hamlet : The Mousetrap. But in what sense ? Figuratively. This play is in the image of a murder done daily in the schools in literature lessons. You will soon see. Ophelia, do you love me ?

Ophelia : I do. But I am overwhelmed by social conditions : two worlds—two systems.

Hamlet (*clapping his hands*) : Call the actors !

*Enter Larissa, Karandyshev, Nina, Arbenin.*

Larissa : How you disgust me, if you but knew. In another socio-political situation I would not stay and look at you, but the mercantile limitations that are within me . . . Why are you here ?

Karandyshev : Where would I be ? There will be a revolutionary upsurge later on, but now I needs must take revenge for your insults. They watch us, how in this thing . . .

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\* Uchpedgiz is the Educational and Textbook Press of the RSFSR Ministry of Education.

Larissa : The thing . . . yes, that's the thing, the thing in itself . . . No, I still cannot know that . . . it is simply a thing. At last I've found the word. You found it ; you have expressed my social tragedy.

Nina : My dear, I wanted to talk to thee.  
For some time thou hast been changed.  
Fresh caresses I no longer get from you,  
Your voice is curt, and your look is cold.  
And it is all a masquerade. O, I hate it.  
I swore never to enter it.  
Noble circles disgust me.  
It is horrible for me, and shameful too, my friend,  
And my heart is wrung with grief  
To see financial-commercial monopolies  
Arising all round . . .

Arbenin : Thou still hast not thrown off the feudal burden. Thou art a weak creature, though an angel of beauty.

Nina : In my breast there is a fire . . . O, if you but knew . . .  
It is as though the sun itself consumes me . . .

Arbenin : Yes, Nina, I bought thee a poisoned choc-ice at the ball.

Nina : Hence, hence ! O, I'll perish in the struggle,  
And I shall curse thee, murderer.  
I oppose thee, oppose thee,  
As a victim of society, now I die . . .

*Dies.*

Ophelia (*gets up, lets down her hair, gathers flowers and sings*).  
White his shroud as the mountain snow,  
Larded with sweet flowers.  
More I cannot bear to know  
Of these school literature hours.

*Gathers flowers.*

Larissa (*approaching the king and queen*) : None of them has tried to look into my soul, and from none of them have I heard a sincere word . . .

Ophelia (*with a quiet, mad laugh*) : La, that's what she wanted . . . into the soul . . . without exposing decaying feudalism . . . (*gathers flowers*).

Larissa : Feudalism . . . That's the word for me !

King : Get thee hence ! Bring me a light !

All : Lights, lights, lights !

Hamlet (*to Karandyshev*) : To be or not to be done in?—that is the question.

Karandyshev : To be done in !

*Shoots them. All fall down.*

Hamlet : Thank you, my lord. What a boon !

All (*rising*) : Better death than dishonour !

**CURTAIN.**

—Translated from ' *Laughter  
is a Serious Business* ', Moscow, 1963



# CYBERNETICS AND EDUCATION

Axel Berg

**I**N HIS memoirs Lafargue cites the following idea of Karl Marx: science achieves perfection only when it succeeds in using mathematics. No special proof is needed of the role of mathematics and electronic equipment in sciences that by their very nature entail calculations of all kinds. The conquest of space, for example, would have been quite inconceivable without the use of mathematical and cybernetic devices. Calculations of the orbits of space ships, particularly the sections for putting them into orbit and bringing them down, are made by high-speed computers that process the information received from the ship at truly 'cosmic' speed and, in accordance with their programme, send appropriate orders to the ship's apparatus.

Is any benefit to be gained from mathematics and electronic computers in the development of the natural and social sciences?

Not long ago an invisible Chinese wall divided the sciences. On one side was the precision of figures and formulæ, on the other were intuition and sheer empiricism. The nucleus of the atom has proved a weaker bastion of nature than the nucleus of the cell. The algebra of the synthesis of helium from hydrogen isotopes is more easily deciphered than the equations of the biochemical interactions in your arm muscles as you turn this page. The biologist did not know where nature had lost the keys to precision and the secrets of life, thought and the senses. Precision and technique, it seemed, were incompatible with the world in which the laws of living cells ruled. But the wall has been breached.

Marked atoms and the electron microscope have come to the biologists' aid. Electronics and computers have invaded the quiet of medical wards. Electronic apparatus is used to count red and white blood corpuscles, and to regulate the supply of oxygen and anæsthetics during operations. Diagnostic machines are more sensitive than the most experienced physician. A patient is suffering from heart trouble: the specialists throw up their hands in despair. The picture is most confused. This is where the machine comes to the rescue. All the necessary data are stored in its electronic memory in a language comprehensible to it: analysing the curves of the heart beat, the machine clearly establishes cycles in the disturbance of coronary performance that are imperceptible to 'the naked eye'.

The methods, criteria and logic of the exact sciences are knocking with increasing insistence at the doors of biological laboratories. Chemistry and physics have demonstrated that certain problems of biology are capable of solution with virtually the same precision as problems of thermodynamics or quantum mechanics. Sechenov said that all the outward manifestations of cerebral activity could be reduced to muscular movement. The hand of the musician produces sounds full of life and passion from a soulless instrument. Under the sculptor's hand stone comes to life. The hands of both the musician and the sculptor, creating life, are capable of performing only purely mechanical movements which, strictly speaking, **can be subjected to mathematical analysis and expressed by a formula.**

In 1960, at the first international congress on automatic control, held in Moscow, spectators applauded when an armless fifteen-year-old boy chalked several words on a blackboard by means of an artificial hand controlled by mental commands. Any thought—for example, the desire to clench one's fingers—gives rise to electrical pulses, biocurrents, in the muscles. These biocurrents are received by an electrical analyser which transforms them into a

command that is communicated to the prosthesis. The success achieved is so convincing that even those people [in the USSR—*Editor*] who seven or eight years ago attacked cybernetics and peremptorily labelled it a 'pseudo-science' and 'idealistic delirium', etc., were unable to ignore it. No one is any longer astonished today that *Literaturnaya gazeta*, for example, opens its pages to a serious discussion on problems of cybernetics, explaining its ideas at a good professional level to a broad readership.

Is cybernetics to be or not to be? That is no longer the question; for cybernetics has firmly established its right to exist. The debate now is about how far it will go in its triumphant march. Dozens of practical problems face cybernetics. In the words of the programme of the CPSU: 'Cybernetics, electronic computer and control systems will be widely applied in production processes in industry, building and transport, in scientific research, planning, designing, accounting, statistics and management.'

So it is high time to realise that cybernetics is something more than the entertaining tricks of machines like electronic chess players and the sensational ideas about designing an artificial brain, normally used by our newspapers and magazines to entertain their readers. I do not know about other scientists, but for me cybernetics is a working tool for the builder of communism, and first and foremost an absolutely necessary means for the speediest construction of communist society.

Our Soviet planning bodies, including Gosplan, have often been criticised at sessions of the USSR and Union Republican Supreme Soviets, at Party congresses and conferences and in the press, with examples cited of short-sighted planning, irrational use of resources, and inadequate guidance by the planners. The criticism has been sharp, but just. And, in fact, how can one dream of conducting the economy of an enormous country with a population of 220,000,000, a powerful modern industry, and a highly developed agriculture, with antique abacuses?

A foreigner who visited Muscovy during the reign of Ivan the Terrible observed that the scribes had plum and cherry stones which each one kept in a little bag, and noted that in the land of Rus accounts were kept by means of plum stones. Four hundred years ago, however, that was a progressive innovation for feudal Russia! But is it acceptable to a people who have taken strides to the stars, to a people who are building communism?

Every month schedules are drawn up for motor transport carrying reinforced concrete components to the construction sites of Moscow Region. As soon as an electronic computer was used to do this, the empty running time of lorries was cut by 100,000 kilometres in the very first month. The plan for transporting excavated earth from Moscow building sites for a ten-day period in August 1961, as drawn up by computer, was forty per cent cheaper than the plan drawn up by men; in those ten days the computer brought about a reduction of transport costs of more than 100,000 roubles. Just imagine what the result for the country as a whole would be of switching over to computer planning!

During 1962 more than 100 problems of transport planning were solved in the computing centres of the Academy of Science. They included optimum plans for transporting timber in Byelorussia, building materials and other freight in Moscow and Moscow Region, sugar beet from the fields to refineries in the Ukraine, flour from mills to bakeries in Czechoslovakia. Incidentally, the computers also recommended a new and more advantageous method of payment for taxi journeys!

The USSR Transport Construction Research Institute and the Computer Centre of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences were given a joint task of working out projects for railway construction. In planning even short sections of railway the machine gave a saving of 10 to 12 per cent. That does not seem very

much—10 per cent; but these percentages work out at millions of roubles!

I am confident that the time is not far off when there will be computers throughout our whole economic system—in transport, industry, agriculture, commerce, banking, and particularly in the planning bodies—freeing people from excessive mental labour. Very soon, it seems, it will become possible to make even more important progress—to create a so-called economic model. Everyone knows how engineers use small models of dams to work out all the details of the design of a hydroconstruction, even the most imposing. So it will be in this case: an intricate electronic ‘organism’ will be a miniature model of our economy. As a drop of water reflects sunshine, it will reflect the statistical relations between the various branches of the whole economy. And on the basis of this model computers will help to obtain rapid and precise replies to such questions as what effect the priority development of any one industry will have on a given group of industries; and, in this connection, what should be the redistribution of material resources, capital investments, etc.

I foresee natural questions: Is it possible to manage so complicated and large an economy consciously and deliberately? Isn’t this a fad? Aren’t there too many fortuitous circumstances that are difficult to foresee and which affect the real course of events? There are grounds for such scepticism: but if the difficulties are exaggerated and confidence in the power of science is lost, then belief in the possibility of the conscious building of communist society also becomes impossible.

There have been plenty of examples in the history of nations of wrong interpretations of the possibility of man’s undertaking the difficult job of managing large societies. One involuntarily recalls Leo Tolstoy’s interpretation of the events that took place at the battle of Borodino on August 25, 1812: on the one hand Napoleon, conceited and hypnotised by his own power and talent; on the other Kutuzov, an old, sick and phlegmatic aristocrat, personally brave and honest, but having long since lost confidence in the possibility of influencing the course of events during a battle. Here are a few quotations: ‘The whole of that day, the 25th of August, Napoleon spent, so the historians relate, on horseback, inspecting the locality, criticising the plans submitted to him by his marshals, and giving commands in person to his generals.’ From this came the ‘famous disposition’. Tolstoy continued: ‘These instructions—which strike one as exceedingly confused and obscure, if one ventures to throw off the superstitious awe for Napoleon’s genius in treating of his disposition of his troops—may be condensed into four points—four commands. *Not one of these instructions was or could be carried out* [my italics—A.B.]. . . . But in the disposition was the statement that, after the battle had begun, further instructions would be given in accordance with the enemy’s movements; and so it might be supposed that all the necessary instructions had been given by Napoleon during the battle. But this was not, and could not be, the case, because, during the whole battle, Napoleon was so far from the scene of action that (as it turned out later) he knew nothing of the course of the battle, and not a single instruction given by him during the fight could possibly be executed’ (pp. 995-8). So much for Napoleon. Now for Kutuzov. ‘From long years of military experience he had learned, and with wisdom of old age he had recognised, that one man cannot guide hundreds of thousands of men struggling with death; that the fate of battles is not decided by the orders given by the commander-in-chief, nor the place in which the troops are stationed, nor the number of cannons, nor of killed, but by the intangible force called the spirit of the army, and he followed that force and led it as far as it lay in his power’ (pp. 1015-6).

Of course, Tolstoy exaggerates. Both Napoleon and Kutuzov controlled the course of events in some measure, and exactly to the extent that they possessed information and were able to get their instructions to the executants. Tolstoy’s

philosophical conception is here to be seen: everything is predetermined; we have to submit to the inevitable and not even resist evil. That point of view is quite unacceptable to us. Formally no one even professes it. But assertions as to the impossibility of controlling complicated processes are very like Tolstoy's views. Just as there are no uncognisable phenomena, but only phenomena not yet cognised, so there are no processes impossible of control—there is only the discrepancy between the difficulty of the task to be solved and the methods and means for its solution. Cybernetics is widening the range of controllable processes; this is its special feature and merit. It can help control the vital activity of living nature, the purposive work of organised groups, and man's action on machines and mechanisms.

Many tasks of machine control, planning and economic forecasting are already fully realisable by means of mathematical statistics, the theory of probability, operational analysis (the theory of games, linear and dynamic programming). I flatter myself with the hope that some time these new mathematical disciplines will be included in our archaic school curricula. But while scientists and teachers break lances in wordy battles with the ministries, I am compelled to explain the meanings of the terms I have mentioned.

Modern mathematics is not quite ordinary: it deals with tasks that seem completely non-mathematical in character. Let us consider one branch of operational analysis—the theory of games. As its name indicates, it is concerned with studying various games, or more precisely with the most rational methods of playing them. Of course a game in mathematics is not simply a leisure entertainment; it is any conflicting situation between two or more parties, each of whom, naturally, wants to win and not to lose. It may be not only a game of chess or of cards but a lawsuit, let us say, or economic competition, or even war.

In solving problems of games mathematics analyses various forms of strategy so as to select the most rational version leading to a win. Concrete practical problems are solved in the theory of games: 'for survival', 'for destruction', 'for pursuit'. Such terminology is widely used by foreign mathematicians. It indicates the kinds of problems that occupy scientists under capitalism, in the conditions of sharp competition between monopolies. But it is not a matter of names. In the long run the methods of solving such problems can be applied with success to situations that have nothing in common with anti-human purposes. It is possible, for example, to place the search for the most rational conditions for working deposits of useful minerals into the class of 'for destruction' problems. The methods of the theory of games are also applicable to studying economic relations between countries.

Linear programming is an important branch of operational analysis. Its methods make it possible to discover the so-called optimal version, the best out of many.

Let us take this example.

How does one calculate the braking force of a space ship returning to Earth? The ship travels twenty-four times as fast as sound, and the temperature of the air cushion in front of it, on entering the dense layers of the atmosphere, may exceed 3,000 degrees Centigrade. Clearly the speed must be reduced considerably by braking, otherwise the ship would burn up. But the greater the retardation the more fuel has to be carried, and consequently the greater the ship's weight and the more difficult its launching. What must be done to meet both requirements? The best way to find the optimal solution is to use the methods of linear programming in conjunction with electronic computers.

A more difficult, but no less promising, field of operational analysis is presented by dynamic programming.

A detective investigating a crime has a number of witnesses before him,

including the guilty party. How should he conduct the inquiry so as to discover the guilty person in the shortest possible space of time? This is a problem of many moves which can be solved mathematically strictly by the methods of dynamic programming. This method seeks the choice of the best 'multistep strategy' in every case where each step affects the situation as a whole, and it is necessary, for successful accomplishment of the end purpose, for all the 'steps' (measures) to be subordinated to a definite overriding law. It can be used, for example, to calculate the sequence for capital investments in various branches of the national economy; to find a considered expenditure of raw material reserves, natural resources, power, or a rational system of sale and slaughter of cattle.

Here is another example. The annual increase of the population of the Soviet Union at present is approximately 1.7 to 1.8 per cent. According to the Central Statistical Administration, the population aged between twenty-five and sixty years numbers about 90,000,000. Of these more than 1,100,000 are engineers, more than 420,000 are doctors, and 400,000 are scientific workers. In the past few years the number of engineers has increased by 10 to 11 per cent annually, scientific workers by 6 to 7 per cent, and doctors by 4 to 5 per cent. This means that while the population doubles in, say, thirty-five to forty years the number of engineers will double every seven or eight years, of scientific workers every ten to eleven years, and of doctors every fourteen years.

There is no difficulty in calculating—by the elementary formulæ of compound interest—that within three decades the ratio of engineers, scientists and doctors to the other groups of the able-bodied population may already prove disproportionate. Consequently, the rates of growth at present adopted will undoubtedly have to be reviewed. But should that not be begun now?

The establishment of correct proportions between all branches of the national economy is similarly a most complex scientific problem that indisputably cannot be satisfactorily solved by primitive calculations on comptometers or office adding machines. Modern methods and automatic machinery are needed for such calculations, and in particular electronic computers.

I understand full well that it is often difficult for people brought up in the scientific traditions of the last century that still reign unshaken in places in our secondary schools and colleges to accept the impudent encroachment of cybernetics into a sphere where the main talent is considered to be human flair and intuition. But would it not be naïve to put our hopes on intuition when there is such an aid to mental work as the electronic computer? And however strange it may seem to some of our practical men who, because of their mathematical ignorance, refuse to understand elementary truths, we shall build communism relying on cybernetics and its wonderful electronic techniques, and the full power of modern mathematical apparatus.

Cybernetics, however, will be of little use unless we possess complete information about the situation in the country. The machine is rather stupid: it will submissively process mountains of low-grade information and produce an equally useless result. But the man who persists in feeding low-grade information into the machine is even more stupid. To prevent any possibility of discrediting the use of electronic equipment in the national economy that way, it is necessary to use only up-to-date, uncontradictory, exact and complete information—information, in a word, that is of full value. If we scientists received such information from our statistical bodies, the progress of our country would be incomparably greater than it is.

The absence of full-value information not only retards the use of cybernetic machines in the economy. The scientific, technical and cultural progress of society also requires an efficient, prompt and all-embracing information service.

On the other hand, it is impossible to solve the problem of obtaining, storing



and processing information without the universal introduction of mathematical methods and electronic machines. We get a vicious circle. The absence of full-value information retards the wide application of cybernetics, while full-value information is lacking in part because cybernetics is not applied.

Where do we begin to break this vicious circle?

At the end!

It is time to put an end to the lack of faith on the part of economists, planners, statisticians and industrial executives, and all those accustomed to work in the old way, in the possibilities of the latest in mathematics and electronics. Scientists are powerless, without reciprocal interest, to introduce the achievements of cybernetics into the economy; and without cybernetics it will simply be impossible for us to build the economy of communism!

It is time to put an end to obsolete methods of teaching languages, mathematics and physics in secondary schools and colleges, methods that ignore the successes of cybernetics. I agree completely with Academician S.L. Sobolev's view on the need for a reform of school curricula.\* Without cadres of scientific and technical workers ready and fully armed with up-to-date knowledge to storm ever fresh heights, it will simply be impossible for us to build the science and culture of communism.

More and more attention is being paid at present to the new, highly effective methods of teaching based on using the achievements of information theory, the theory of games, optimal solutions, and on using electronic teaching machines.

Here we have imperceptibly approached the problem of acquiring knowledge in the conditions of a constantly mounting avalanche of scientific and technical information.

If the system of teaching remains unchanged, what will be the outcome? Judge for yourself. You start school at seven to eight years of age. Consequently, you enter an institute at the earliest at the age of eighteen or, after military service or a term of work, twenty. Five or six years later you leave college an engineer or a scientist, and start working. You will spend three or four years gaining experience and then, turned thirty, you will become a specialist—no longer young. Yet with the present rates of development of science and technology the volume of information will grow and grow, year by year. It needs no great stretch of imagination to visualise a time when school desks would be occupied by thirty-year-old schoolboys, lecture rooms by forty-year-old students, and laboratories by fifty-year-old 'young specialists'.

But, joking aside, the problem of information cannot be solved solely by administrative measures. Both the teachers and the scientists and engineers have their word to say.

Interesting work is being done in the field of designing logical information machines. The chief object pursued by the scientists is to solve the problem of information.

Library users of the not-so-distant future will have no need to delve into catalogues, seeking first the index number of a book and then the book itself, and finally leafing through page after page to find the line containing the idea, formula or figure needed. Electrical impulses will instantaneously find and report the required information in the form of a printed text or a television picture. In a single hour such a machine will be able to read more than 10,000,000,000 figures, or 250,000 printers' sheets, which is the equivalent of 4,000,000 ordinary octavo book pages. Later, it seems, it will be possible to increase the speed to 12,500,000 printers' sheets of text an hour. In the space

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\*In an article in *Yunist*, 1962, No. 6.



of two eight-hour working days the machine could read through the whole of the Lenin Library!

It is difficult to visualise mentally the limitless prospects held out by the use of such machines. The time that now goes into looking for needed information will be reduced—this takes at least a third of the time that I, for example, spend working. At the very first request the 'electronic encyclopædia' will issue any facts, formulae, theorems, calculations or drawings required. Any school child, student, scientist or engineer, any reader in any part of the country, will be able, by means of an ordinary telephone inquiry and switching in of a television set, to obtain any information he requires, even a translation from a foreign publication that first saw the light of day only a few hours previously. For the 'electronic encyclopædia' will contain enormous dictionaries of foreign languages by means of which an 'electronic translator' will be able to translate at the rate of ten sentences a second! Some scientists suggest that it will be expedient in the future to print all scientific and technical materials on tapes for the long-term memory devices of information machines at the same time as they are printed by ordinary typographical means. It is possible to go still further and put manuscript information into machines and then select it as required for printing. With such a method there would be no need to wait for the publication of books; the exchange of views, ideas and news among scientists of all continents would be effected at lightning speed. Machines will also carry out a meticulous analysis of any given field of human knowledge, checking to see whether there are any contradictions between data newly received and data previously recorded.

As yet all this is just a project. But it is not at all fantastic. An experiment was made in 1957 in transmitting the contents of several pages of text recorded in a long-term machine memory device from one district of Moscow to another via the city automatic telephone exchange. A clear image of the text could be read on the television screen. But that is nothing to what will be!

'That will be a paradise for the lazybones and the sponger', many parents may think with reproach and alarm. Let me assure you, dear fathers and mothers, that there are no serious grounds at all for such fears.

An American engineer checked the working of his brain with a stop-watch. The results were not terribly consoling; more than four-fifths of thinking time was spent on auxiliary operations. It was necessary to concentrate, to determine the object of work, to collect information, to mark graphs and diagrams, and to analyse them. Only after such preparatory procedures did the brain begin the creative comprehension of the results of the work. That meant that a scientist's active apprehension time is spent mainly on actions that are of a purely mechanical or office nature: calculations, transformations, drawing, and so on. So the question arises: why not entrust these functions to a machine, leaving the purely creative ones to man?

A French firm one day published a curious advertisement: 'Research engineers of initiative and energy required. Inclination and ability to work on new problems is of more importance than erudition in classical fields of technology.'

The author of that advertisement had no need of walking encyclopædias with brains crammed with all kinds of information from various fields of science and technology. And what need is there for them, indeed? Such know-alls will be increasingly replaced by electronic machines. But the demand for inventive engineers, discoverers and scientists will continue to grow year by year.

But before becoming a real inventor or a discoverer of the new, a man will inevitably have to test his powers in solving various problems that reveal his inclinations and abilities, and that means mastering without fail a definite minimum of rules, methods and ways of solving problems. In other words, the

widespread introduction of information machines will not do away with school training, but will make it, in all probability, even more active and filled with even greater creative content, so as to inculcate in young people the high standard of mental work required by the communist age.

Naturally there is no need to burden students' useful volume of memory with transient information, such as chronological dates, economic indices, etc. But the questions of principle needed to understand the essence of a problem, particularly methods of solving the most up-to-date problems of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, need to be studied even more profoundly and fundamentally, especially because the widespread introduction of automatic electronic equipment sets, and will set, the human brain more and more creative work in connection, for example, with programming, for without a programme, complicated or simple, the machine is dead.

Here, too, electronic machines will come to the aid of teachers. Automatic teaching machines are already in operation at the Moscow Power Institute and the Academy of Educational Sciences. They discover mathematical and grammatical errors and do their own marking. Such electronic 'coaches' and 'examiners' promise new advances in school tuition, especially in the study of languages. By freeing the teacher of arduous and purely mechanical operations the machines will give the educator scope to reveal his pedagogical talent to the full.

In our age, when mathematics is penetrating all the sciences, a fundamental and immediate reorganisation of school and university curricula is needed. In my view it is quite possible successfully to transfer some of the subjects now studied in the first years of higher education to the senior forms of school: the fundamentals of mathematical analysis, analytical geometry, the theory of groups, mathematical logic, the theory of probability, mathematical statistics. In specialised schools it would be advisable to provide for the pupils to be given a theoretical and practical acquaintance with electronic equipment and programming.

The widespread and universal use of electronic computers holds out the promise of a transition to a qualitatively higher stage of progress. It does not matter that the boundaries of cybernetics have not yet been clearly defined, that many of its hypotheses are debatable, that the lines of its development have not been completely explored—its theoretical significance and practical usefulness arouse not the slightest doubt.

The scientists have made their contribution. It is now up to the practical workers and the teachers.

*Yunost*, 1962, No. 12. Translated by E.F.

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# **The Soviet Union Revisited**

## **I. RUSSIAN HOSPITALS TODAY**

**Robert Roaf**

**I**T IS ALWAYS rash and often presumptuous to comment on another country's institutions; to make judgments about the work of another country's hospitals is usually the height of folly. It is even more foolish to make comparisons between hospitals of another country and those of one's own. There are so many differences on social customs and attitudes, and, indeed, it would be necessary to work for many years in another country's hospitals before one could assess fully their good and bad points. So in describing my impressions of Russian hospitals I am only too conscious of my inadequacies.

My first visit to Russia was in 1935 when I was a very junior participant in the International Physiological Congress which was organised in Leningrad and Moscow. I have many vivid and exciting memories of that memorable visit, and in particular that the congress was extremely well organised, but I remember that the hospitals which I then saw were rather old and shabby structures which tended to be overcrowded and on the whole compared unfavourably with our own in this country. There were many reasons for this, and shortages of man-power were still present in those times; indeed, in those days foreign doctors frequently took service in the Soviet Union for a period of years. Since then there has been a great increase in the number of doctors; both the output of qualified doctors from the medical school and the number of medical schools have increased, and the general standard of medical care has much improved.

In 1954 I again went to the Soviet Union as a member of a medical delegation. We visited Leningrad, Moscow, Tbilisi and Sochi, and saw many different types of hospitals and clinics. It was a fantastic visit, and one was impressed with the tremendous advances that had been made. Nevertheless, I realised that it was a relatively superficial visit and left as many questions unanswered as it answered.

One was able to get a slight glimmer of the general organisation of Soviet medicine. The first line of defence is, of course, the polyclinic. This is a cross between a large group practice and the casualty department of a hospital. For instance, in one city polyclinic which had no beds and served approximately 25,000 adults the staff consisted of, among others, one director of surgery, two surgeons, two E.N.T. surgeons, two gynæcologists, two cancer specialists, two ophthalmologists, two neurologists, two radiologists and one endocrinologist in addition to pathological staff. All these work for a five-hour day. From the polyclinic, patients with conditions of special difficulty or interest were referred to district hospitals or to one of the general institutes which specialise in certain subjects, e.g. neurosurgery, tumoursurgery, orthopædics, etc. In addition, in the larger towns there are a number of emergency hospitals which deal with all emergencies, medical and surgical, for the sector in which they are situated. For instance, in Moscow the famous Sklivosovsky Institute treats accident cases, sudden collapses, coronary thromboses, strokes, hæmorrhages and all manner of emergencies, including poisoning. Indeed, it has established a special reputation for surgery of the oesophagus, excising a stricture when by mistake somebody has drunk a caustic fluid such as sulphuric acid in mistake for vodka. One had the impression that the special institutes have a

higher status and greater prestige value than the district general hospital—this is in striking contrast to the policy here, which is to raise the status of the general hospital above that of the special hospital. In addition to the polyclinics and the hospital service in the USSR there is, of course, the system of sanatoria, to which I will refer later.

This year I had the opportunity of visiting Russia again, primarily to attend and give a paper at the first All-Union Congress of Orthopædics and Traumatology. During this time I was able to visit a number of hospitals and get to know some of their leading orthopædic surgeons, talking to them and exchanging ideas and experiences on a highly personal basis. Although I could not claim to be an expert on the Soviet medical system I feel that this visit has given me a certain insight into their hospital service, so that some of my observations might be of general interest to people in this country.

If we had to try to decide whether a given hospital or medical system was doing its job properly one might ask individual patients whether they are satisfied or one might study the official statistics for morbidity and mortality. I must admit that I have done neither of these things in any detail, partly because I feel that the benefits derived from medical services and hospital treatment are often intangible and that many other factors besides the quality of the service provided affect both the patients' answers and official statistics. Instead I have tried to assess the hospital system under six main headings.

The first heading is: **was morale satisfactory?** By this I mean was the standard of care, interest, kindness, knowledge and enthusiasm of the doctors good? To this question I can give an unqualified answer of 'yes'. I was very impressed with the individual doctors, both young and old, with whom I spoke. Clearly they were all keenly interested in their subject. They obviously worked hard, providing a high standard of kindly care for their patients; and at once I found there were many mutual bonds of interest between myself and the various Russian orthopædic surgeons, so much so that I would very much like to visit them again and learn more of their work at first hand.

Secondly, **was there a sound career structure?** By this I mean were there adequate openings for men of outstanding ability and drive? Equally, was there a place in the hospital service for people who were not outstanding but were conscientious and kind? Was there adequate encouragement of hard and disinterested work? Was any group of workers exploited? The continental career structure in the hospital service has always been rather different from our own, and in Russia there are considerable resemblances to the German career structure in the sense that the head of the clinic or professor tends to be an all-powerful figure with rather more powers of direction over his clinical colleagues than we are accustomed to in this country. Nevertheless, I was impressed at the Central Institute of Traumatology and Orthopædics in Moscow by the many different departments, e.g. for plastic surgery, sport injuries, tumours, tissue transplantations, children's orthopædics, etc. Each department had a director or assistant professor apparently fully responsible for that department and the care of patients under its control, and at this level there appeared to be almost complete autonomy. Each department was intensely proud of its achievements, and in each I saw excellent and interesting work. The young doctor who aspires to a career in, for example, orthopædics after a certain number of years post-graduate work presents a thesis. If this is accepted he becomes a *docent* or assistant head of a department, from which he may graduate to head of department or perhaps ultimately director of the institute. Although different from our own, I felt that their career structure gave good openings to the hard-working young surgeon, and that the material recompense in terms of salary, *vis-à-vis* the rest of the population, was at least comparable with what the surgeon may receive in this country.

The third point which interested me was: **was there sound team work?** By this I mean were the different types of work allocated according to an individual's abilities? The Russian team was in some ways different from ours in the sense that the junior doctor appeared to do some of the work which in our hospitals would be done by sisters, and on the whole the nurses did relatively unskilled work. It is, of course, hard to judge exactly how accurate this observation is unless one has actually worked in a hospital for a considerable time. All I can say on this point is that their team appeared to be organised differently from our own; it seemed to work well, but whether it was better or worse I could not say.

My fourth point was **the quality of their records.** At some of the special institutes these were very good, in the sense that accurate records and a good disease index were kept, and there was adequate filing of records and X-rays. But in general the record-keeping was a little disappointing. There did not seem to be sufficient medical secretaries; the filing system of case sheets and X-rays was on the whole less good than at our best hospitals, and the records were often only written in longhand and only occasionally typed. I have no doubt that when the young surgeon wishes to research into some special condition or disease or operation he is able to find the records, and from looking at their theses I saw that many first-rate pieces of clinical research were done. But I felt that on the whole facilities for clinical research were not as good as they might have been and that in this respect they could perhaps learn something from us.

The fifth point was **the quality of ancillary services,** such as X-rays, laboratory services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, almoning services, and other things such as central sterile supply departments, the use of disposable goods, e.g. dressings, catheters, syringes. Here again I had the feeling that these subjects had not been studied as intensively in the Soviet Union as in this country, and I felt that exchange of information on the economics of running a syringe service versus disposable syringes could be of great mutual benefit. But in one aspect of ancillary services, namely their sanatoria, they certainly have something which is, in my opinion, better than the comparable institutions in this country. A Soviet sanatorium is a cross between a rehabilitation centre and a holiday camp, with the best features of each; and along the whole Black Sea coast innumerable sanatoria have been built in which tired workers or people convalescing from an illness or operation can have an enjoyable holiday and recuperate under ideal conditions. I have always been very impressed with this particular aspect of the Russian health services and feel that it is one we could copy with great benefit in this country.

The last point in which I was interested was **the quality of their buildings.** As with us, the majority of Soviet hospitals are in old buildings, but during the 1950s they built some magnificent new institutes, particularly in Leningrad and Moscow. My feeling at this time was that these buildings were almost too lavish, and that perhaps money had been spent unnecessarily in making them too magnificent. The newer hospitals, such as the Central Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedics in Moscow, are plain functional buildings, well designed and pleasant, but without any expensive trimmings; and I thought that in this respect their ideas in hospital building were on the right lines. Of course, there are some aspects of Russian hospitals which are different from our own. Instead of the old 'Nightingale' wards or the more modern idea of cubicles, as in this country, each department tends to have a corridor off which there are a number of wards containing perhaps six to eight beds. There is a pleasant, friendly atmosphere in each of these little wards, but I imagine that the nursing of a seriously ill patient might be difficult. Nevertheless, this was obviously one of those things in which the Russians genuinely prefer an arrange-



ment different from ours. There was no question of saying that their wards were better or worse than ours; they were merely different, and probably more suited to their own population's wishes. The arrangement of their operating theatres in general followed the continental plan, of three or four tables in one room, and of course they use much more local anaesthesia than we are accustomed to in this country. Again, it is not necessarily a question of saying that our arrangement or theirs is the better; it is just that there is a difference—partly for historical reasons.

Although it is not strictly a hospital, no account of any visit would be complete without saying a word about the conference itself. This was the first All-Union Conference of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, and it was attended by some 800 orthopaedic and traumatology surgeons. The conference itself was extremely well arranged. The main sessions were held in a theatre, adjacent to which there was a small garden; at the opposite side there was a cinema in which films of medical interest were shown. Conference sessions lasted from nine in the morning till half-past three in the afternoon, with two short breaks; and from five to seven medical films were shown. In the evening there were programmes of entertainments and visits to theatre, ballet, concerts, etc. I was very much impressed by the liveliness of the sessions, and how keen, interested and hard-working the various participants were. On one or two points I felt that perhaps they still had something to learn from this country, in the sense that on the whole the quality of their slides and projection was not as good as ours, and the quality of their medical books was also, on the whole, below what we have. On the other hand I was very impressed with many of the new developments in research work that I saw, in particular the outstanding work on the surgery of the spine being done by Professor Chaklin at the Moscow Orthopaedic Hospital; and the transplantation of refrigerated whole bones at the Central Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedics; and finally the bio-electronic artificial arm prostheses developed at the Central Institute of Prostheses.

Personally I found my recent visit most interesting, stimulating and enjoyable. I realise that my comments are necessarily of an extremely superficial character; all I can say is that I hope to have the opportunity of revisiting the Soviet Union in the near future and acquiring a deeper knowledge of Russian medicine and the hospital service. Lastly I would like to thank all those who were so kind to me, arranged my visit, made it extremely enjoyable, and took endless trouble to see that I had a thoroughly good time in the best sense of the word.

## II. SOVIET GEORGIA

David M. Lang

I HAVE BEEN engaged in studying and teaching Georgian language and literature at London University for nearly fifteen years. In 1960 and 1962 I was able to pay two visits to Soviet Georgia, at the university's expense and under the auspices of Intourist, in the course of which I made a number of lasting friendships. It was a pleasant surprise when one afternoon last November the head porter of the School of Oriental and African Studies handed me an impressive envelope resplendent with cosmonaut stamps and bearing the Tbilisi postmark. Inside was a letter from the Georgian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, signed by its vice-president, Alexander Zhghenti: 'Please come and spend three weeks in Soviet Georgia as our guest before the end of this year.'



As Christmas was not far off, there was no time to lose. But everyone proved ready to help. The Soviet Embassy immediately furnished me with a visa, the university bought me a plane ticket as far as Moscow, while Mr. Campbell Creighton, of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, sent off a telegram to the USSR—Great Britain Society in Moscow, whose assistant secretary, Mr. Ivan Rozanov, met and looked after me on both my outward and return journeys.

Thanks to these helpful friends, I set off by Comet from London Airport on November 18, 1963, and arrived in Tbilisi the same night, having driven straight from Sheremetevo to Vnukovo Airport by the new Moscow ring road, some seventy miles in total length, which circles the Soviet capital with a broad sweep of fast motorway. From Vnukovo onwards the journey already took on a Caucasian flavour. On board one of the modern jet aircraft which maintains a thrice-daily non-stop service between Moscow and Tbilisi, a trim air hostess announced that we were about to take off in a plane, 'belonging to the civil air fleet of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic', due to arrive at Tbilisi in two hours and twenty minutes. When our plane touched down it was already eleven at night.

There to meet me was my old comrade Nodar, a member of the staff of GODIKS, as the Georgian society is called for short, who had already travelled with me to several corners of Georgia and shared many a colourful experience on my earlier visits. Nodar is a fine Persian scholar, a wit and a boon companion, and he and I have become as inseparable in Georgia as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. With him, too, was Intourist's champion chaffeur Niko, likewise an old acquaintance and hero of many exciting drives and hair-raising escapades.

The next morning I hastened to renew my good relations with colleagues at the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR, at Tbilisi State University and at the Georgian Museum, where I had an interview with the Director of the Institute of Manuscripts, Professor Ilia Abuladze, in consultation with whom I am preparing on behalf of UNESCO a new translation of the Georgian classic prose work known as *Balavariani*. This is an ancient version of the legendary life story of the Buddha, known in western Christendom as 'the edifying tale of Barlaam and Josaphat', and is only one of many important works of imagination with which the Georgians have enriched world literature.

Knowing my ambition to visit as many historic towns and monuments as possible in the time at my disposal, my host, Alexander Zhghenti, quickly arranged a comprehensive programme for my stay. On November 20, Nodar and I left for Kakheti—Georgia's most easterly province, once a separate kingdom, and famed today for its wine and agricultural wealth. Kakheti can be reached from Tbilisi by air, by road or by train. The single-line railway was built in tsarist times, and its route was mapped out by local feudal magnates with a view to serving as many of their principal chateaux as practicable. The track still meanders from one village to the next, though the trains have been considerably speeded up since the day when a driver stopped at the level crossing to offer a lift to an old granny on a donkey. 'No thank you, son,' she retorted, 'I am in a hurry today!'

Nodar and I went by car along the newly asphalted post-road. Tractors were ploughing collective farms beneath the shadow of ruined medieval donjons, and in the villages trim schoolboys in peaked caps and red neckerchiefs walked to school while little pink pigs rolled and squealed by the side of the road. Our first stop was at Signaghi, a picturesque walled town perched high above the plain of Kakheti. From there we went on a brief pilgrimage to the nearby shrine of Bodbe, which contains the tomb of Saint Nino, the holy slave woman who converted the Georgians to Christianity during the reign of Constantine the

Great.\* The night was spent at Telavi, formerly capital of Kakheti, in a little hotel close by the walls of the citadel of Erekle II (1744-98), a warrior king who kept Georgia's Muslim foes at bay for half a century, until overwhelming odds forced him to enter into a vassal relationship with Catherine the Great of Russia, thus paving the way for the annexation of 1801.

The following day was a memorable one. In the morning we visited the former nunnery of Shuamta, now used as a kindergarten. At this superbly beautiful spot we came upon a group of about forty little children aged from three to five, dressed in baggy pantaloons and white pinafores, and shuffling across the courtyard in single file under the vigilant eyes of two attractive young ladies in charge. The irrepressible Nodar promptly tacked himself on to the procession and went off to play musical bumps with the tiny tots and their fair teachers, while I scaled the monastery belfry, from which I had a magnificent view over the beech woods and hills to the far side of the great plain of Kakheti and the Caucasus range beyond. From Shuamta we went on to the ruins of Iqalto, site of an important medieval academy—the first university of the Caucasus—and the wonderful cathedral of Allaverdi, which stands aloof and sublime in the midst of an immense open space. In the afternoon we crossed the Alazani, of whose waters I drank deeply in token of respect for Kakheti's national river, and visited the ruins of the ancient royal city of Gremi, clambering up the pinnacles of an old palace perched high upon a rock. In the church next door an artist was hard at work restoring the frescoes on the wall. A party of villagers enjoying a picnic outside the porch restored my flagging energy with a glass of wine and a slice of warm *khachapuri*, as they call the local cheese cake served at every feast.

It was dusk when we reached Qvareli, a picturesque old town close to the foothills of the Daghestan mountains. I was invited to see the museums dedicated to the memory of Qvareli's two famous sons—Ilia Chavchavadze (1837-1907), renowned as novelist, poet, journalist and statesman, and Koté Marjanishvili (1872-1933), a great *régisseur* and founder of Georgia's first *avant-garde* theatre. Later that evening the staff of the museums took us out to dinner. An English visitor with even a modest knowledge of the Georgian language is a rare bird in that corner of Georgia, and I found myself elected to the honourable if strenuous dignity of *tamada*, or toastmaster. Alas, my attempts to uphold the honour of England and match my hosts speech by speech and glass by glass proved too much. It is true that later that night I found my bed unaided and without untoward incident, but next morning came the reckoning. We left Qvareli amid the affectionate and solicitous farewells of the staff of the Chavchavadze and Marjanishvili museums, whose spontaneous kindness convinced me that what little suffering I had endured in doing justice to their welcome was indeed in a good cause.

This trip to Kakheti was followed by two more expeditions, this time to Western and South-western Georgia. Being an official guest, I enjoyed a privilege rarely accorded to western visitors—namely that of visiting the medieval cave monastery of Vardzia, close to the Turkish frontier. Vardzia is situated in the former province of Samtskhe. On the way there we passed through the ancient Georgian capital of Mtskheta, at the confluence of the rivers Aragvi and Mtkvari or Kura. We stopped for a few minutes to pay our respects to the sepulchres of Georgia's kings, in the Cathedral of the Life-Giving Pillar. This great edifice forms the subject of an historical novel by a leading contemporary Georgian writer, Konstantin Gamsakhurdia, entitled *The Right Hand of Great Master Constantine*, which has been translated into French and English. The cathedral is well cared for by the authorities, the only disconcerting feature being the recent replacement of the ancient tomb-stones on the graves of Kings

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\* See my *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, London, 1956, pp. 13-39.

Erekle II and Giorgi XII by a couple of tasteless monuments in a modernistic 'allegorical' style. Other features of our Vardzia expedition included a heavy snowstorm which blotted out Gori, Stalin's home-town; a sight of the remarkable medieval castles of Adsquri, Khertvisi and Tmogvi, the scene of famous battles against the Turks in bygone days; and a dinner party given by the genial secretary of the Communist Party Regional Committee at Akhaltsikhe, the old capital of Samtskhe, where British visitors are few and far between. Vardzia itself must be one of the most impressive feats of construction in the world—over 200 cells, chapels, public rooms, storehouses, and even stables, carved out of a sheer cliff many hundred feet high. Though pillaged and destroyed by the Persians in the sixteenth century, enough of this breath-taking structure still remains to give a grandiose impression. The whole monument is now being restored under the direction of the Georgian Academy of Sciences.

A few days after our return from Vardzia, Nodar and I were on our travels again, this time on the local Tbilisi-Krasnodar plane, in which we flew as far as Kutaisi, capital of Imereti province in Western Georgia. Once celebrated in Greek mythology as the city of Medea and the Golden Fleece, Kutaisi is now a city of over 100,000 inhabitants, with a fast-growing industrial suburb built round the large commercial vehicle works, and a busy airfield from which helicopters take off almost hourly to maintain contact and provide transportation for villagers in the highlands of Svaneti and other districts of mountain Georgia. We were met and entertained by a local writer, Levan Sanikidze, author of an historical novel about Medea, in which the enchantress is portrayed in a more sympathetic and less gruesome light than in the drama and legend of classical Greece. Levan and his friends took us to see the ruins of the Bagrat Cathedral, blown up by the Turks in the seventeenth century and now in process of restoration; and the monastery of Gelati, once the seat of a powerful archbishop—Gelati has a fine series of frescoes, some commemorating the reign of King David the Builder (1089-1125). The scandal is that most of these have been disfigured by the pencils and penknives of modern visitors, mostly Georgians, so that what even the Turks did not succeed in demolishing is now being ruined by a hooligan minority not ashamed to destroy their own artistic heritage. I included a few pungent remarks about this in a broadcast I delivered over Radio Batumi, and gathered that these met with the approval of educated public opinion.\*

We also paid a visit to the little town of Mayakovsky (formerly Baghdadi), birthplace of the bard of the Russian revolution. I was particularly interested to track down the ruins of the old fortress, captured from the Turks and destroyed by the Georgian king Solomon I and Catherine the Great's German general Count Todleben in 1770. We then went to a peasant home to assist at the ceremonial broaching of a huge underground vat of home-made wine. The next morning we spent in visiting the Kutaisi Museum, which numbers among its treasures at least one unique silver coin of ancient Colchis, and in viewing the prehistoric dinosaur footprints uncovered on Sataplia Hill and the modern mineral spa and health resort of Dsqaltubo.

It was with regret that we left our Kutaisi friends for the half-hour flight to Batumi on the Black Sea. After flying over the marshes of the Rioni estuary and the wooded hills of Guria and Atchara, we arrived at Batumi in a shower of torrential rain. A cosmopolitan port with an important oil refinery, Batumi is too well known to need description here. We were welcomed by the director

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\* Dr. Lang is not alone in his protest against this form of philistinism. In a recent article Dr. Bader has protested at the way caves in the Urals containing unique cave drawings are being disfigured by visitors who feel the urge to let people coming after them know they were there. A particularly large MGU provoked Dr. Bader to suggest that this disgrace to the reputation of Moscow University should be publicly discussed by its students.

of the Batumi Research Institute, Aslan Inaishvili, who showed us the important excavations he is carrying out at the old Roman fortress of Petra (Tsikhisdziri), which dominates the sea between Batumi and the resort of Kobuleti to the north. Most memorable was a day spent in Guria, a province noted for its individual brand of dialect humour and the fierce courage of its famed *piralebi* or guerilla outlaws of old. The desperate resistance put up by the Gurians to the tsarist Cossacks of General Alikhanov-Avarsky after the revolution of 1905 resulted in the burning of whole streets in the regional centre of Ozurgeti, now Makharadze. As well as being marksmen and hunters, the Gurians have an inexhaustible fund of wit and repartee, tenderness and pathos, providing inspiration for several plays which have recently enjoyed great success throughout Georgia—*Me, Granny, Iliko and Ilarion* (subsequently filmed) and *I See the Sun* (soon to be shown in Moscow), to name but two. From Makharadze I made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Shemokmedi, where the mayor entertained us with wine, oranges and home-made fruit brandy, and then to the church of Likhauri, where a false step in a dark doorway left the pattern of the stone lintel imprinted on my forehead.

Guria and Atchara are noted for their tea plantations and orange and tangerine groves, the fruit being of exceptionally good flavour. Citrus fruit picking was in full swing at the time of my visit, early in December, and the harvest showed every sign of being a bumper one.

These expeditions left relatively little time for sustained work in Tbilisi itself. However, I spent a busy day at Tbilisi University in company with Professor Akaki Shanidze, one of the founding fathers of the university back in 1918 and now the acknowledged master of Georgian language studies. Professor Shanidze presented me to the rector, Professor Kharadze, a leading Georgian scientist, and I was happy to meet again old friends and colleagues with whom I had been in correspondence or whom I had met on my earlier visits.

I was also invited to a spirited performance of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* at the Opera House named after the composer Paliashvili, and spent three stimulating evenings at the theatre. Tbilisi has two Georgian-language drama theatres, the Rustaveli Theatre on the main boulevard and the theatre founded by Koté Marjanishvili on the other side of the River Mtkvari. There are also flourishing theatres in other Georgian towns, including Kutaisi, Batumi, Sukhumi, Makharadze, Gori and elsewhere. The repertoire contains a large proportion of new, topical Georgian plays by young local playwrights, some of which have been filmed or translated into Russian and staged throughout the Soviet Union.

It is quite wrong to picture the Georgian stage as completely dominated by Russian models. During the Stalin 'personality cult', of course, the Soviet theatre everywhere went through a period of enforced stagnation and mediocrity. This is now a thing of the past. Topics of the moment are commented on and social satire is given quite free rein. The same situation prevails in the Georgian press, radio and television. Naturally enough, international news and decisions of the Soviet government in Moscow are supplied to Tbilisi newspapers by the Tass agency, and considerable space is devoted to these. But both the Russian-language *Zarya vostoka* ('Dawn of the East') and the Georgian *Komunisti* ('The Communist') give great prominence to local administrative, industrial, educational and cultural affairs. The same applies also to provincial Georgian-language papers produced at Kutaisi, Batumi and elsewhere, as well as to local broadcasting stations in leading centres. I myself, though not a Communist, have been asked to broadcast over Tbilisi and Batumi radio, and have appeared on Georgian television and given several newspaper interviews. There has never been any attempt to censor, or tamper with, my script, and my words have always been transmitted or printed with scrupulous fidelity—more

so, in fact, than is always the practice in Fleet Street. Local political leadership in Georgia is in the hands of the Georgian secretaries of the local Party committees, many of whom I met on my travels, and very competent and helpful I always found them.

On November 29, 1963, I attended the Georgian première of Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* in a version made by Givi Gachechiladze, who was at my side during the performance. Shakespeare's plays have long been an integral part of Georgian literature, ever since the days of Ivane Machabeli (1854-98), who translated many of them direct from the English originals. The role of Beatrice was played by Medea Japaridze, while Dogberry and Verges were impersonated by two splendid Georgian comics with the utmost gusto and hilarity. Being a new production, there were one or two small technical hitches. Thus Borachio, whom in this production we saw in the act of climbing down from Hero's window, brought a large lantern crashing from the balcony to the ground, while Friar Francis, descending a staircase in a resplendent canary-yellow robe, caught its hem in a projecting nail and had to bend down and cast himself free with an oratorical flourish of his arm. These little incidents in no way detracted from the gaiety of this new and popular feature of Georgia's Shakesperian repertoire.

On December 7, two days before I left Georgia, I attended a dinner party given by a group of colleagues from the Georgian Academy and University and the Society for Friendship, including several historians, linguists and literary critics renowned throughout the Soviet Union and even in the learned world of the West. It was exciting to meet again two great figures of Georgian literature, the poet Giorgi ('Gogola') Leonidze, and the novelist Konstantin Gamsakhurdia. A gargantuan, truly leonine figure with an unbounded capacity for good food, drink and talk, Gogola has taken an active part in every Georgian literary movement for the last half-century, beginning with the heady days of the 'Blue Drinking Horns' before World War I, through the period of socialist realism, and culminating in the directorship of the Institute of Georgian Literature named after Georgia's national bard Shota Rustaveli. Gamsakhurdia, a frail figure with flashing eyes and a truly Voltairean turn of caustic phrase, maintained his literary integrity intact through the Stalin era at the cost of great personal suffering, and is now revered as the patriarch of the contemporary Georgian novel. The professional diplomatist helps to oil the wheels of international relations; but it seemed to me as I looked round the table that evening that the simple scholar, by his very disinterestedness, may sometimes succeed even better than the diplomat in bridging the gap between countries of differing political aims and ideological creeds.



## A LEGION OF EDUCATORS

IT IS difficult to decide where to begin this article. Even the authors of the Russian pamphlet on which it is based\* found it necessary to approach their subject from different angles, and we cannot reproduce their account in full. Primarily, this is an account of educational work in one neighbourhood of Moscow. It is also about new forms of local self-government that are interesting in themselves and beg for fuller description and explanation. But, being about voluntary social work, it is above all a story about those people one meets in every society and locality, whose personal drive and initiative are indispensable to the working of existing institutions, and who are the creative force producing new ones.

This article is about the tenants of Housing Office District No. 8 (which we shall refer to henceforth as MHO8 for economy's sake) of Moskvoretsky District in the city of Moscow. As in other housing districts in Soviet cities, these tenants have their statutory house committee responsible for many important services on their housing estate and to control the work of the manager of their housing office. Their committee was first elected in 1960, soon after the management of state-owned housing of every kind was reorganised and put under the control of housing offices run by the municipal councils. Like other house committees, it set up ancillary committees and councils, including a parents' committee to look after the needs of the children of the district. As chairman of the parents' committee was elected Ida Mikhailovna Strax, a retired school teacher and a member of the committee of the newly formed Communist Party branch of MHO8.

The main thing the parents' committee should concern itself with, Ida Strax thought, was the problem of getting children off the streets and combating the harmful influence of the streets—the 'third force' in their formative environment. MHO8 is one of the old areas of Moscow, not yet redeveloped, and has a population of 12,000. There was not much for the children to do after school in this neighbourhood except to play in the yards and streets; and many of them spent some hours each day without supervision when their parents were at work. It is the lack of supervision in street play that does the harm; what could the parents' committee of MHO8 do about it, Ida Strax wondered.

Under her lead the parents' committee decided that the answer would be a club for schoolchildren. Ida Mikhailovna took the matter up with Alexander Mikhailovsky, the secretary of the Party branch, and Peter Fyodorov, the chairman of the house committee. They undertook to find premises, and got five rooms with a floor space of 2,500 square feet on the ground floor of No. 16 Orphan Lane assigned for the purpose. The housing office also donated tables and chairs, and fitted up a small stage.

The next problem was to persuade the local children to come to the club and use it. The parents' committee and the house committee were very definite about one thing; they did not want membership confined to their own children, with a consequent division between 'theirs' and the 'others'. The whole aim was to get the 'street boys' to come. A plan of club activities was prepared. People were found to lead various circles and hobby groups, and it was agreed that the boys and girls should themselves run as much of the club as possible.

It was decided to open the club with two circles in action—one for ballet and the other for mass dancing, both led by Barbara Shkvarina, who was already known to many of the children from the dance group she ran at the small Red Corner on Tollgate Street, which was the community centre for

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\* Yury Skrylev, Vladimir Fatyanov. *Vospitatelei legion*. Znanya, 1963. Extracts selected and rewritten by H. C. Creighton.



this neighbourhood. Anatole Krupin, a factory worker well known locally as an accordionist, promised to play for the circles.

On the opening night a house-warming dance was held. It was very gay. The merry sound of Anatole's accordion could be heard in the street, and caught the ear of the 'lads'. Some of them came in out of curiosity to look around and size up the new club; having come, they stayed, and joined in the dance.

That was the beginning. Soon the club had seven circles: art, model aeroplanes, drama, dance, chess, photography, music: and later more were added. Each circle had its own tale of the initiative and enthusiasm of a voluntary worker. The model aeroplane group is an example. The idea was popular with the boys at the club, but they had no material for making planes. Two fourteen-year-old boys, Gene Mityukov and Andrei Nesterov, who were 'activists' of the club, decided to approach the director of a big store known locally as 'The Sucking Pig' for help. They were not disappointed. The manager gave them a number of tea chests and plywood boxes. Then they found someone to lead the circle—Peter Velich, an engineer. But the circle was so popular, and so many lads joined it, that the whole stock of material was used up on the very first planes they built, and the circle operates with a chronic shortage of wood.

The story of the music circle is rather different. Valentina Kulkova, director of the Stasova Children's Music School, became its patron. She gave the club two of the school's Russian accordions; and two of her teachers agreed to come and give lessons on the piano-accordion, Russian accordion and domba. The housing office also supplied a piano-accordion; and soon, of course, members of the circle began turning up with their own instruments. It was not long before an orchestra of twenty players was being formed.

The drama circle had still a different beginning. Tamara Rumyantseva, a local housewife, took it on, rather reluctantly; she needed much persuasion that she had the necessary talent as a producer. She had it, however, and the club now has budding actors and readers, and a drama company that has begun to put on quite difficult plays.

Though each circle has its devoted adult leader, and the parents' committee keeps a constant eye on its offspring, the 180 children who regularly attend are its real bosses. The most active and authoritative among them sit on the club council and guide the work of its various commissions: cultural work, finance and management, sport, etc. In this way the children are learning self-government, which is, of course, something quite different from the self-reliance of the streets; and in this way the club is training real organisers and leaders.

The club was not intended solely as an organised play and hobby centre. It has one circle that includes members of many of the others: young actors, musicians and needlewomen. It is run by Michael Konoplev, another member of the local Party committee, and is attended by children from eight to fifteen years of age who want or need help with their school arithmetic and algebra. Konoplev adopts an individual approach to each child, setting problems suited to his or her age, and his evening sessions are as complicated as a simultaneous chess display on twenty boards. He is assisted by a retired civil servant, Alexander Serdyukov, who used to work at Gosplan, and who has discovered an unsuspected talent for teaching. In addition to helping backward pupils with their problems, Serdyukov interests them in the theory of numbers, and gives them talks on space travel. Each of his talks has a basic theme: without mathematics you cannot even dream about space. He also leads the chess group, where he has an even bigger following—you will find all his 'towline mathematicians' there at his 'Four Knights Club'.

With the growth of the club a library was set up, run by another voluntary worker, Maria Bovina. There is many an argument in the library, for Maria Bovina believes it part of the work to develop the reading tastes of the children.

That is what they argue about, as she tries to show them that there are more interesting things to read than crime stories and books 'about war'. The stock of the library comes from the local public library; and from time to time it is completely renewed, Maria returning the books the children have read and getting a new supply. So in effect the club library has become a branch of the borough children's library and has helped to extend its readership.

With these activities, and its table tennis tournaments and acrobatics group, the club has triumphed over the street. Now as the children come home from school they wonder what is on today at the club. And there is something for everyone to do, interesting things that rouse enthusiasm.

During the school holidays the club is particularly busy. The decorations of the rooms and the songs and dances are changed according to the season. Children spend whole days there, taking part in competitions, concerts, excursions, meetings with interesting people, film shows. Every minute is taken into account. Fyodor Semyonov, the honorary warden of the club, is the key figure. Every evening he looks in on the various groups just to see that everything is in order. He seldom has time to stay, but the children love him and try to impress him. Semyonov has one 'weakness'—draughts, which he plays like a real master. To the children he is unofficial champion of the district, and it is their ambition to beat him. As for the draughts players, they are his best assistants in the club, helping him to keep an eye on everything.

With all these activities it would be easy for the children to forget all about their school homework. But they are not allowed to; and the leaders of the various activities very quickly know what has happened at school. The club social workers also maintain close contact with the local schools. The children of MHO8 in the main go to three Moskvoretsky schools, Nos. 540, 550 and 629. The head of school 550, Dora Fyodorovna, needed little persuasion to co-operate with the club on Orphan Lane. But the heads of the other two schools did not immediately understand the importance of making a common educational front against the 'third force'. They waved the sensible proposals of the social workers aside, and were rather late in joining the alliance with them. Now, however, all three heads co-operate well with the club and co-ordinate their own extra-curricular activities with it. Club circles also meet sometimes at the schools or use the school workshops.

The initiative in getting this co-ordination came from the MHO8 Party committee. A meeting of representatives of the schools and MHO8 was held, at which a joint council for extra-curricular activities was set up, consisting of five to seven parents of pupils in each of the three schools. And when it calls a meeting of parents it gets an even better turn-out than the parents' committee of MHO8. A plan for joint use of club and school premises and equipment was drawn up; it was decided, for instance, to use the assembly hall of school 540 for public activities. The carpentry shop of school 629 became the training centre for instructors of woodworking for the club and all three schools.

These friendly contacts with the schools stimulated the club workers to consider establishing relations with local factories. Previously they had only approached them for material help, especially for money, since their own finances were very limited. Trade union branches had helped the club, for, after all, the children of members went there; and they had also helped the leaders of the various groups and circles, because some of them worked in local factories and offices. But why not put relations on a more planned basis? Many factories were patrons of schools; why should they not also become the patrons of housing district committees that were doing work among children?

The Goznak Works in Moskvoretsky District became an important helper at MHO8, especially its branch of the Young Communist League. Nikolai Bekerev, the YCL secretary at the time, was very enthusiastic, and helped the

organisers of many circles with people and money, and himself took an active part in the club chess circle. Other YCLers followed his example. Lena Yero-kooova and Lena Osipova began working with the camera club, got new cameras for it, and everything needed for a small dark-room. Raya Degtyareva led the dance group; and when she fell ill another YCLer from Goznak, Tamara Ovsyannikova, took over and kept up the standard. The two became good friends in the process. The council of the Goznak Sports Club organised volleyball, basketball and table tennis sections at the club, led by YCLers, while other sportsmen from the factory helped them. Regular football, volleyball and athletics competitions were organised in the area of MHO8. Skating rinks were built in the yards of all the six separate housing estates that made up the district, and ice-hockey rinks with goals with real nets. The link with Goznak was initiated by Ida Strax. 'Nikolai Bekerev and his boys helped us a lot', she says. 'They got us bulldozers and lorries. There's not a single yard where there's not a YCLer working. Now Nikolai's the foreman of a shop at the works; we're very happy for him, of course. But the new secretary, Eugene Chesnokov, isn't so good. He seldom comes to see us, and doesn't pay the same attention to our needs. You have to talk on the phone with him—if you can get through to him.'

The club proved a useful organising centre. One spring, for example, the parents' committee decided to carry out a clean-up and painting campaign on all six housing estates. The children at the club were told about their plans and asked to help with the campaign. They all decided to take part. One of the boys, after consulting his comrades, designed a six-foot banner with the slogan 'Let our street bloom like spring.' Then, after much thought, he changed the full stop to an exclamation mark. In the end everyone took a hand: the school-children, their parents, and their little brothers and sisters. Grass was cut, flower beds were weeded, fences were mended and whitewashed. The work not only rallied the children, but brought them close to the grown-ups.

That, too, was another idea of Ida Strax's. Her latest scheme has been to set up a new 'Youth' club for adolescents. A drawback of the children's club was that it catered for schoolchildren of all ages, and the little ones gathered there along with pupils from the top forms. Together they watched the same films and the same cartoons, though their needs and interests were different. How to make the division was a problem. How were they to carry on the self-government aspect of the club without throwing too much responsibility too early on the smaller children? But they already had the problem of how to avoid treating the bigger children like little ones.

The main difficulty, of course, was to find premises. This was solved by good luck. A big room at a factory hostel in the district fell vacant. It meant some trouble to get hold of it, but that did not deter Ida Strax and her fellow committee members. The Party branch backed them up, and in the end the club workers 'annexed' the room. The youth club has been set up. How it is working is a new story, which we cannot tell here.

Nor have we space to tell about the old age pensioners' council of MHO8 and its grannies' council and the baby-minding service it runs as a result of a chat Ida Strax had with her friend Esther Fuchs, a retired doctor; or about the special Sunday meal service for children arranged by the parents' committee with the local restaurant.

But there is one other Straxian venture that we must mention in conclusion. This one Ida Mikhailovna put into effect through the history teachers of the local schools and several groups of their pupils. A few weeks after their plan was worked out a meeting was called at the club, attended by 400 boys and girls from all the housing estates, to celebrate 'The Tollgate Street Children's Festival'. Ida Strax chaired the meeting; Seryozha Lastochkin, one of the

activists, spoke first. 'Our Tollgate Street isn't very big', he said, 'and it's not very famous. And of course it's not like Gorky Street, with its monuments to Pushkin and Mayakovsky and Gorky, its noise and traffic, and its high buildings. And our Tollgate Street hasn't the traditions, for example, of Krasnaya Presnya. But our street has its history, and we ought to know it, and be proud of it.'

The Young Pioneer Vic Zaitsev told the assembled kids about a visit he and a group had made to the Goznak Works, and told them something about its history and the outstanding people working there. Another Pioneer, Andy Laptev, told about the work being done at the big Morozov children's hospital. Others told about 'The Sucking Pig', where it got its merchandise, what they were doing to improve service for the customers. And then Vic Zverev, leader of the young historians circle of the club, talked about Peter Dobrynin, a worker in the telegraph and telephone factory, who had taken part in the fighting of the November revolution and whose name had recently been given to the local main street and square, once known as Cow Bank and later as Serpukhov Square and Street. The boys and girls, in a word, learned quite a lot about the place they lived in, and from that day they began to feel a little differently about it.

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# STANISLAVSKY AND THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE

G. Kristi

From an article specially written by one of Stanislavsky's  
close collaborators in the theatre.

IN 1897 there took place that celebrated meeting between Stanislavsky and the well-known dramatist, theatre critic and teacher V. Nemirovich-Danchenko, which had such real historical significance when they decided together to found in Moscow a popular theatre whose company was to be composed of the best amateur actors trained by Stanislavsky and pupils of Nemirovich-Danchenko's Philharmonic School, among whom were Olga Knipper (later Chekhov's wife), Moskvina, Savitskaya, Roxanova and Meyerhold. Recalling this meeting, Stanislavsky said: 'A world conference of nations does not discuss problems of state in such detail as we then discussed the foundation of this future undertaking.'

The founders of the Art Theatre complemented each other. Stanislavsky by that time had become a mature master of the stage, an outstanding actor and innovator-director. Nemirovich-Danchenko brought to the new undertaking his great talent for production, his literary taste and his organising and teaching experience. From that time on the creative partnership of these two people never ceased; and even when at times differences arose between them, brought to light by their different creative approaches, they never split on the main issue, each of them understanding the great problems of art and the final aims of the Art Theatre.

The beginning of the activities of the Art Theatre coincided with a period of growth of the revolutionary movement in Russia. Every honest artist had to determine for himself not only his æsthetic point of view, but his social one as well, and to recognise clearly what avowed end his art served. In his inaugural address Stanislavsky said to the actors of the theatre: 'Do not forget that we are striving to brighten the dark life of the poor, to give them happiness and beautiful moments in the midst of the gloom which has enveloped them. We are striving to create the first rational, moral and popular theatre; and to this high purpose we are dedicating our lives.'

When speaking of Stanislavsky's ethics, which became a component of his teaching on the theatre, we should bear in mind not only the standards of behaviour for the actor in the company, as devised by him, and his demand that the artist must have moral integrity, but primarily his dictum which became the basis of his world outlook—that service to art is a form of service to the people.

The Moscow Art Theatre opened on October 14, 1898, with A. K. Tolstoy's historical tragedy *Tsar Fyodor Ivanovich*, which for long had been suppressed by the censorship. It portrayed a weak-willed Tsar, and in essence discussed autocracy. In this play the co-producers Stanislavsky and Sanin and the scenic artist V. A. Simov recreated a true picture of life in old Russia and strove to achieve detailed and psychological authenticity in representing all levels of society. Special care and artistry were devoted to the crowd scenes.

There followed a series of historical and moral plays on similar lines: *The Death of Ivan the Terrible*, by A. K. Tolstoy, Hauptmann's *Fuhrmann Henschel*, L. Tolstoy's *The Power of Darkness* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Cæsar*. All evidenced the passionate striving of Stanislavsky and the workers of the young theatre to establish artistic truth on the stage and elimi-



nate false theatricality. But 'this artistic truth', Stanislavsky later confessed, 'was mainly superficial at the time'. Too deep an engrossment in historical and social authenticity brought the pitfalls of naturalism, and the leaders of the Moscow Art Theatre knew it.

The theatre can only live a full-blooded, creative life and attract the public by its art when it can find its own talented dramatists who express the progressive ideas of their age. In the person of Chekhov, and after him of Gorky, the Art Theatre found its dramatists, who creatively understood the most pressing problems of the day. Their work inspired the art of the Art Theatre, furthered its swift flowering, and for a long while determined its path of development. It is therefore no accident that a seagull is the emblem of the Moscow Art Theatre, and that the theatre was later to bear Gorky's name.

Stanislavsky did not grasp the merits of Chekhov's *The Seagull* right away. Its innovatory form was unusual. There was no preoccupation with intrigue. The vulgar and commonplace in the behaviour of the characters were combined with the elevated and the poetical; comedy with tragedy; and behind insignificant words could be glimpsed from time to time a profound spiritual struggle. But as he worked on his director's plan for the production, Stanislavsky by degrees became more and more attracted by the profoundly vital truth and poetry of the play, and found new artistic means for its theatrical presentation and an unusual stage setting.

The triumphant first night of *The Seagull* on the stage of the Moscow Art Theatre on December 18, 1898, turned out to be a significant date in the history of the Russian theatre.

Chekhov's plays helped Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko to master to perfection the art of producing plays, all the elements of which were subordinated to a single artistic end. The principles of stage ensemble were finally established. The performance of the Chekhov plays also demanded new, more polished methods of acting and the most subtle interaction of the players on the stage. A new setting technique was needed—the technique, as Stanislavsky defined it, of the 'art of experiencing' and not of 'representation', which would enable an artist to live on the stage and not to pretend to be and not to seem to be. The very concept of 'a producer's art' acquired a new and deeper meaning from that time.

Stanislavsky regarded Gorky as the founder of the social and political trend in the Art Theatre. Whereas Chekhov's characters dreamed passionately of a new and better life, Gorky's sounded a call to action, to the fight for this better world. And in *The Philistines*, produced on March 26, 1902, a new type of hero was introduced on to the stage for the first time—the worker, the engine-driver Nil, who boldly asserted his rights. The play was severely distorted by the censors, and on the day of the dress rehearsal, Stanislavsky recalled, strong detachments of police were posted inside the theatre and around it, while mounted police patrolled the square in front.

*The Philistines* did not, however, enjoy the undoubted success of Gorky's second play, *The Lower Depths*, whose mercilessly accurate reproduction on the stage of the Art Theatre of the life and unhappy fate of the down-and-outs, of the 'dregs of society', had a shattering effect on the public. Stanislavsky not only produced the play, but also played Satin, into whose mouth the author had put his own thoughts about social injustice and the struggle for human dignity.

The tour of the Moscow Art Theatre abroad at the beginning of 1906 brought confirmation of its fame as a progressive theatre, and heightened interest abroad in Russian art and literature. Stanislavsky's action and direction from that time onwards received world recognition.

The reaction that followed the defeat of the 1905 revolution affected all

spheres of public life. Many were overcome by disillusionment, which plunged them into confusion, pessimism and alarm. There was a widespread tendency towards decadence, and a lowering of standards. The realism of the Art Theatre was subjected to bitter criticism. Its artistic style had become dated, it was said. Many people in the theatre, in their search for fresh outlets, took refuge in an overpowering theatrical conventionality, and deliberate entertainment and æsthetic stylisation. Attempts were made to revive the modes and methods of long out-dated theatrical periods. In most cases these attempts led to a sterile formalism and divorce of art from life.

During this difficult period Stanislavsky found himself at the crossroads. He knew that the past achievements of the Art Theatre, however splendid, did not give them the right to rest on their laurels. These very achievements demanded further growth and continuity. Meanwhile the theatre suffered a severe loss: Chekhov died, and Gorky was forced to emigrate, and worthy replacements for them were not to be found. The search for 'a new art', which expressed itself in the attempt to set up an experimental studio with Meyerhold and the experience of staging Maeterlinck's symbolist tragedies, was not crowned with success. The dream of creating a genuine people's theatre seemed unrealisable. Stanislavsky's joy in creativity disappeared, and he passed through a profound crisis. He thought about this with concentration during the summer break, sitting for hours on end on the cliffs on the Gulf of Finland. And it was with thoughts of 'where do we go from here?' that he returned to Moscow for the beginning of the 1906-7 theatre season.

The need to work out his course in art and to penetrate the secrets of creativity in order to become master of himself on the stage forced Stanislavsky to start writing. He set about an exposition of the so-called 'system' of the actor's art, which he was still working on at the end of his days.

It cost him three decades of stubborn labour to work out fully the basis of a technique of professional acting and a method of 'working' the stage. In the course of this work, his teachings on 'theatre' and on the ethics of acting became unified, and his theory of stage 'realism' took shape. All this taken together we now regard as the 'Stanislavsky system'.

The Stanislavsky system asserts that art is profound and vital truth, born of natural processes in accord with nature's own laws. This art, born of the living thoughts and experience of the creative artist, is capable of working on the mind and heart of the spectator with the greatest effect, enriching him spiritually and moulding his consciousness. But it is not easy to attain such a result. Straddled across its path are theatrical amateurism and routine, against which Stanislavsky conducted an implacable battle. His 'system' is also aimed against the thoughtless naturalism and the soulless formalism which impoverish art and lessen its immense social and educative role.

The first experiments in applying the 'system' to the 1907 productions of Knut Hamsun's *The Drama of Life* and Leonid Andreev's *The Life of a Man* did not bring the hoped-for results. On the other hand, Stanislavsky achieved outstanding results in the field of revitalising stage effects and possibilities, and enriched the director's arsenal. The opinion gained ground that in his absorption with symbolist art Stanislavsky was betraying realism and becoming a director with 'leftist' tendencies. However, his experiments in the sphere of symbolism and stage abstraction were of only a temporary character. He discovered the main road to the development of theatre in the strengthening of realist principles and not in abandoning them, in a continued polishing of the actor's skill and not in superficial stage effects. 'The talented actor is the only tsar and lord and master of the stage', he said, rebelling against the despotism of the producers and designers who had usurped the actor's prerogative.

An extremely fruitful period was enjoyed during the pre-revolutionary

decade, when he turned his attention to Russian and foreign classics.

With such a wide repertoire he proved the living strength of his method and continued to mature as a director. He now got rid of the masses of everyday naturalistic detail and the overcrowded stage sets of the early Art Theatre productions and, beginning with the staging of *A Month in the Country* in 1909, strove for a deeper revelation and realisation of the inner world of characters by the most sparing external means.



**S**TANISLAVSKY did not at once grasp the tremendous significance of the October revolution, but he never occupied a pensive 'sitting on the fence' position, and in the new historical conditions, while overcoming the difficulties of the transition period, he continued to act according to the dictates of his conscience as an artist and a citizen.

He understood that his long-held dream of creating a people's theatre was realising itself, and he called on his comrades in art to perform with honour their new duties as citizens. The repertoire of the theatre was purged of the pointless superficial plays that had crept on to its stage during the pre-revolutionary decade, but their replacement was extremely slow. Stanislavsky decided that while waiting for the new dramatists and talented plays that would express the unexampled heroism and enthusiasm of the revolution it was necessary further to polish and press forward with the perfecting of the backward inner technique of acting, and he directed his seething energies to the training of a new artistic generation.

Starting in 1905, he had periodically created theatrical studios, seeing in them a means of renewing the theatre. By the time of the October revolution, the First Art Theatre Studio, opened in 1913, had already become an independent theatrical company. At the end of 1916 the Second Studio was formed: its students later became part of the Art Theatre and were its second generation. In 1918 Stanislavsky became the head of the Opera Studio of the Bolshoi Theatre, which was later to become the opera theatre bearing his name. Besides working with these two studios, Stanislavsky supervised the training of the pupils of Vakhtangov, who in 1920 formed themselves into the Third Art Theatre Studio, which later became the Vakhtangov Theatre. He also supervised the training of the pupils of several national studios and of the Griboyedov Studio. Assessing Stanislavsky's tremendous teaching activity, Gorky said he was 'a skilled jeweller in the matter of bringing out and "cutting" talent'. Homage, he wrote, should be paid to Stanislavsky 'for all that unseen and, it goes without saying, most difficult work of creating the best artists of the theatre in the world'.

In the middle thirties, Stanislavsky, 'the great mutineer', stood on the threshold of notable new discoveries in the field of the nature of acting. All he had hitherto mastered began to seem to him only the preparation for this art which beckoned from the future. Influenced by the teachings of the materialist physiologists Sechenov and Pavlov, and by Soviet playwriting, he was groping for a new way of creating a stage image, by which the actor might attain the ultimate in organic stage behaviour. To prove this new method, which has become known as 'the method of physical action,' it was again necessary to resort to experimental work, and in 1935 Stanislavsky founded an opera and drama studio in order to train an actor of a new type.

Once more his home was filled with youth. Day after day he met now the drama group, now the opera group of the studio, striving to infect them with his ideas. Soon he also began experimental work with a group of Art Theatre actors, among whom were Olga Knipper-Chekhova, L. M. Koreneva, M.

Kedrov, V. Toporkov and others. As material for the exercise Molière's comedy *Tartuffe* was chosen, which was produced at the Art Theatre by Kedrov after Stanislavsky's death.

During the same period he used to meet a group from the Opera Theatre, supervising their preparations for the production of Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *The Dravaz Ravine*, an opera by Stepanov based on the struggle against counter-revolutionaries in Central Asia.

The illness that had overtaken Stanislavsky did not condemn him to a sheltered life. He took a lively interest in everything going on around him, and kept up links with people of widely different professions and nationalities. Among his guests one might meet such outstanding representatives of Soviet and foreign art as the Chinese actor Mei Lan-fang, the Negro singer Marian Anderson, the writer Alexei Tolstoy, the film producer Sergei Einstein, and the composer Shostakovich.

Stanislavsky was anxious to put down everything that his long creative experience had taught him. In 1937 he sent the first part of *An Actor Prepares* to the press. In addition he frequently published articles that showed a keen interest in current affairs and real civic pride.

In an article shortly before his death he turned his attention to the youth of the theatre, and called on the young generation of actors 'not only to master everything that the old culture created, but to raise our culture to new heights that were inaccessible to the people of the old society'.



WHEN ONE thinks of him, before one's eyes rises the majestic figure of this amazing man. One recalls his monumental, harmonious figure, his slightly solemn but at the same time gracious carriage, his light, gliding gait, the soft, gentle smile, the fluffy, early-greying hair on the slightly held-back head, the deep, musical voice, and his kindly, inquiring look, fathoming the heart of the man to whom he was speaking.

It was only necessary for Stanislavsky to start speaking for the hearer to be fascinated by the inexorably clear, though at times surprising, logic of his judgments, to be infected by his passionate conviction, and transported by the brilliance of his imagination. In him there were, one would say, at first glance, many strangely irreconcilable qualities: the inspired spontaneity of the artist and the analytical mind of the scientist; an almost childlike simplicity and the wisdom of a philosopher; fully dedicated in the moment of creation yet with constant self-possession; combining an overall grasp of a future thought and scrupulous care for the working out of details; an endearing delicacy in his relations to those about him yet nevertheless, with all that, the power to demand their utmost from them. All these heterogeneous qualities combined with a limitless love for art, and with a consciousness of a high responsibility for its destiny, to produce an irresistible effect on people. Even those who did not know him personally also experienced the powerful influence of his ideas, and recognised his right, as Alexander Blok put it, to be 'the ultimate judge'. Often his contemporaries called him the conscience of the theatre and the lawgiver of art.

It is impossible not to regret that his great theatrical roles and creations as a director are receding ever more into history, and that fewer and fewer witnesses of his art remain. But Stanislavsky not only created roles and productions; he created a school of art, a new trend in the art of the theatre, based on the best traditions of stage realism, on the principle of the organic character of creation. With this he has immortalised his name and the cause of his whole life.

Already a quarter of a century has passed since his death, but this historically

great period has not weakened his influence on our present-day theatre. On the contrary, his ideas are only now becoming common property, and his great genius is just beginning to be felt in our own day.

Stanislavsky is one of those giants of human culture who not only belong to their own time but look far ahead as if they were talking to future generations; and in solving pressing problems of modern theatre, theatre people turn time and again to him for advice and find in him accurate answers to the problems that engross them. If we admit the scientific and objective value of Stanislavsky's discoveries it is impossible to abrogate them or replace them by something else, but it is necessary to study them and develop them and perfect them, as the creator of 'the system' himself admonishes us. 'Tradition in art', he used to say, 'demands development, and continuation—not academic stagnation. Therefore only in the hands of the true artists of the stage, who are seekers, curious, striving after authentic truth and natural beauty in art, does "the system" become a powerful weapon in the struggle for the highest ideals.'

Stanislavsky's path in art was closely bound up with the story of the Moscow Art Theatre, but even in his lifetime his ideas were spreading far beyond the confines of the theatre he created. He already belongs to the whole world of the theatre; to all those to whom his legacy is dear, and who are endeavouring to follow the path he signposted. His influence can be felt wherever there is a theatre, and it would not be too much to hold that all the stagecraft of our century is developing under the force of his ideas.

But the theatre is not the only sphere to be influenced by his ideas. Some film makers assert that his method is even more adaptable to the cinema, since the screen is specially sensitive to any departure from the truth. Musicians—executants and teachers—find in Stanislavsky's teachings the answer to many of the problems that vex them: about the development of artistic gifts, and the mastery of creative emotion, and so forth. Dramatists are attracted by his theatrical theories. Natural scientists consider that he made a great contribution to knowledge of human nature; philosophers that he enriched the science of art; teachers that he discovered new ways of educating the will, attention and imagination, qualities that are needed not just by actors.

The heritage that Stanislavsky left is far from assimilated, but it is obvious that his contribution towards the national and human culture is extraordinarily great and varied. His genius enriched the world with new artistic values and extended the frontiers of human understanding, and his name can therefore be numbered among those of the greatest artists and thinkers.

When Pushkin died they wrote of him: 'The sun of our poetry has set.' Stanislavsky has been called the sun of the Russian theatre. He illumined it with the brilliance of his genius, and won unfading glory for the theatre of his country. Today the full light of his teaching is illuminating the path of every questing artist towards high craftsmanship and genuine artistic truth.

*Translated by D.W.*



# Surveys and Reviews

## DIPLOMACY—OLD AND NEW

Maurice Hookham

A RUSSIAN translation of Harold Nicolson's four lectures on 'The Evolution of Diplomatic Method' (the Chichele Lectures at Oxford in 1953), with an introductory article by A. E. Bogomolov, has now been published in Moscow.\* Two of Nicolson's earlier works on diplomacy were translated into Russian in 1941 and 1945. His father, Arthur Nicolson, had been British Ambassador in Petersburg in 1906-8. The lectures provide the Russian reader with some interesting facts about the development of western diplomatic techniques and provide a basis for understanding the approach of the western diplomat, because they are still an important part of his basic education.

Unlike other western writings on diplomatic methods, which aim at providing the diplomatist with immediate practical guidance in his work, these lectures are a wide-ranging study of diplomatic method based on the history of diplomacy from ancient Greece to the present day. Nicolson limits his definition of diplomatic method to treaty making. He supported this standpoint in his work on *Diplomacy* some thirty years earlier with a quotation from the O.E.D.: 'Diplomacy—the conduct of international relations by means of treaties . . .'. There is one diplomatic method for him, treaty making, and its evolution is seen not as a progress from imperfect to perfected method, but rather as a series of regressions in terms of the place of treaties in the general theoretical framework of international law.

The introduction emphasises that, in doing this, Nicolson evades all consideration of the historical stages in the development of society, and their influence on international relations. His series of regressions is shown to be subjective and unhistorical, divorced from the history of the development of society, and based on abstract types of diplomatic method. The 'new diplomacy', which he dates from 1919 and associates with Woodrow Wilson, is shown by Nicolson to be inherently dangerous because it is an attempt to extend liberal democratic internal policy to the field of foreign policy. His advice to the western powers is to revert to the old tried methods of conducting international relations by treaty making by trained professional diplomats removed from party politics. His scorn for the amateur, dilettantist methods of American diplomacy is especially severe. The Russian introduction concludes by pointing out that, in recommending a return to the 'French' method of secret diplomacy conducted by professional diplomats, Nicolson is expressing a vain wish to turn the clock of history back to the times when independent capitalist states were able to settle their differences secretly. That era closed for ever in 1917, when the setting up of an independent socialist state in Soviet Russia made this no longer possible. The translation and publication of the lectures in Russian is interesting in that it shows how seriously Soviet diplomats take their job of understanding the attitudes of western diplomats, and the introduction provides the reader with a most useful and succinct criticism of

\* *Diplomaticheskoe iskusstvo*. Institute of International Relations, Moscow, 1962, 117 pp.

these attitudes from a Soviet point of view. It has some excellent notes, but regrettably no index.

The second of these books\* is a textbook which is used in Soviet law schools and which has been excellently translated by Dennis Ogden. It has a number of supplementary illustrative charts and a very full bibliography of works in Russian, English and French. Again, even more regrettably, it has no index. It is that very good kind of text-book which consistently provides the reader with answers to the questions he is likely to put to it. It is especially good on the analysis of the social bases of the various concepts which play a part in international law and relations. For example, the opening of chapter five, which deals with the conception and importance of state territory, provides in simple terms an understanding of the different conceptions of the state and shows their importance in relation to international law in which the state is the subject. The historical analysis is throughout well done in the breadth of its sweep and in the details of the examples discussed, which are always shown to be relevant. Most of these are taken from standard works in use in the West, but a good deal of new light is thrown on them in the fresh examination given in this work.

In the course of time the Soviet Union has entered into international relations with more and more countries and, just as with these other countries, international law is increasingly of importance. The third book† is a simple scientific account of the legal position of foreigners in the USSR. It provides information in an easily comprehensive form on the legislation and international treaties which determines the legal position of foreigners in the USSR. on the rules regulating work and study of foreigners, their property and family rights in Soviet courts and tribunals, and their civil and administrative responsibilities. The first edition of this work appeared in 1959 and was translated into English and Spanish in 1961. This second edition brings the work up to April 1, 1962.

After the October revolution the engagement of the new Soviet state in foreign trade and in legal relations with foreign nationals made it necessary to continue to operate much of the form of the existing law. This has been adjusted from time to time. In the period around 1924, when a number of treaties recognising the Soviet state were made with foreign countries, there was considerable adjustment. The central problem remains. Each national of another country who is actually present on Soviet territory is subject to two codes of law: that of his own state and that of the Soviet Union. This brochure sets out the matters on which Soviet law applies and those on which the national's own law obtains, showing the rights and obligations on particular matters within each code.

In many matters the foreigner had, and continues to have, the same rights and obligations in the USSR as does the Soviet citizen. There is no special law setting these out, but there is an important section of the civil law code of 1961 which contains the relevant parts of the laws, treaties and agreements affecting the foreign resident. Problems may arise, for example, when a foreigner resident in the USSR dies and leaves no heir to his property. The problem could be settled by reference either to the law of his own country or to Soviet law. The code sets out rules for the settlement of such conflicts or 'collisions' of the laws.

In some matters the legal rights of foreigners in the USSR are dependent on the recognition of reciprocal rights by the foreign state for Soviet citizens resident in that country (for example, the registration and protection of trade marks). This cannot be done, however, where the matter is one in which the social basis of law in the two countries is different (for example, a foreigner

\* *International Law*. A textbook for use in law schools. Edited by Dr. F. I. Kozhevnikov, Institute of Law, Moscow. FLPH, 477pp.

† *Pravovoe polozhenie inostrantsyev v SSSR*. M. M. Boguslavskii and A. A. Rubanov, Institute of International Relations, Moscow, 1962, 142pp.

may not own land in the USSR and neither can a Soviet citizen, but a Soviet citizen has a legal right to own land in, say, France, under French law. On the other hand, a South African who in his own country has no right to marry someone of a different race has such rights when resident in the Soviet Union. Foreign residents enjoy all the legal rights to the full range of social services in the Soviet Union (education, medical aid, etc.) on the same terms as Soviet citizens. There is a good brief statement on page 88 of the law on copyright in the Soviet Union which has been the subject of so much argument. In such a multi-lingual state it is not surprising to find that the problem of copyright for the translation of written works has been dealt with in a special way in the law which applies both to the Soviet citizen and to the foreigner.

The second edition of this work, following the codification of the law in 1961, is a necessary replacement of the first, and it is to be hoped that it will in turn be translated into English.

## AFFLUENCE FOR STUDENTS

W. S. Bailey

THE EAGER student of Russian who is still flailing about in any of the stages before take-off—that glorious day when he sails easily into the empyrean with, perhaps, *Prestupleniye i nakazaniye* as pleausurably as he might with *Le Rouge et le Noir*—has today no cause to complain of being neglected. Enormous efforts are being made to help him in his struggles. A few years ago we had to be content with cautious publications having titles of such limited appeal as *A Russian Reader*, or, more excitedly, *A Second Russian Reader*, but now we live amid affluence and an embarrassment of riches.

Not only the lonely student, but the pupil in school and his anxious teacher, all at different degrees of alarm in the face of oncoming 'O' or 'A' levels, will welcome each of these present books according to his need: each is a valuable and efficient learning and teaching aid at its own particular level.

At an elementary stage the *Russian Dramatic Reader* of C. S. Elston offers eight short sketches of somewhat slapstick action in sharp dialogue designed cunningly to practise basic speech patterns for those, as the author says, who have as yet only a very brief acquaintance with the language. Teachers who are familiar with Dr. Elston's *French Classroom Comedies* will welcome these sketches as genuinely actable at school concerts and end-of-term junketings. The first three are more or less translations from his French compilation. As many 'characters' as possible are employed (there are fourteen on the stage in one sketch) and the parts call for just the right amount of learning effort.

Hovering about 'O' level are *Russian Short Stories* and *Hot Stone*. The former is a very skilfully compiled and edited set of stories ranging chronologically from Lev Tolstoy to Kassil, and including such diverse authors as Kuprin, Bunin, Zamyatin, Paustovsky and Gorky. Each story has been very well chosen for ease of sentence-construction and vocabulary, and is preceded by a short informative note on the author's life and works. The last 100 pages are occupied by carefully graded exercises of the question-and-answer and true-or-false type, lists of words and idioms appropriate to be memorised at this stage, and a very thorough and complete vocabulary.

*Hot Stone* is a collection of short stories by Soviet authors. The selection is unpretentious, with an air about it of a friendly and somewhat shy cultural offering that is very disarming. The stories for the most part seek an uncomplicated and familiarly optimistic response and the language is simple. This latter fact is largely the result of the stories having been abridged and adapted, some of them considerably so, which is freely admitted in the compiler's short introduction. They should appeal to young upper-fifth or lower-sixth formers,

both boys and girls. The gem of the twelve stories selected is an abridgment of Yuri Nagibin's *The Winter Oak*.

A few years ago any teacher leading his pupils up into territory beyond 'O' level might quickly find himself almost out of their sight on a narrow ledge frantically brandishing the only useful copy of the set book available. Now miraculously the maps have been issued and the footholds cut and he can clamber on equipped, with his pupils all correctly roped together. Foremost in the pioneering and the rescue work have been the excellent Bradda Books Ltd., of Hendon. Their widely ranging list of titles in the series 'The Library of Russian Classics' already includes such diverse items as Turgenev's *First Love*, Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* and Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman*.

In each of the present three volumes there are an introduction, a section of notes on the text, elucidating difficult passages, and a very full vocabulary. In his introduction to *Shinel*, Mr. James Forsyth discusses the nature of Gogol's satire and inspects the bewildering attitudes of the writer, who led his contemporaries into such wild misjudgments as to his intentions and thus provoked the immortal anger of Belinsky. Mr. Bernard Fitzjohn's introduction to *Kavkazski Plennik*, besides giving a biographical note on Tolstoy, provides the student with a very useful detailed synopsis of the actual narrative. The explanatory notes in both volumes are very helpful.

More sophisticated fare than *Hot Stone* for discerning 'A' level palates are the four Bunin stories, selected by P. Henry, of Liverpool University. Every help is given to the student by means of a full vocabulary and meticulous annotation, which includes explanation of difficult or interesting constructions, and there is an introduction which gives biographical information on Bunin and offers the student the broad general critical assessments necessary for a first approach to this author. The selection includes Bunin's most famous story, *The Gentleman from San Francisco*.

The Penguin Parallel Text selection, *Soviet Short Stories*, is designed to appeal to a much wider public than any of the foregoing collections. There is a very brief but very perceptive introduction, followed by eight stories, with Russian text and good English translation on facing pages, short biographical notes on the eight authors, and notes on the Russian texts. The great achievement of this book lies in the amazing skill and unerring taste with which the stories have been selected: eight perfect specimens of genuinely first-rank writing by any standards, chosen from the vast heap of about forty-five years' production—over-production, as Richard Newnham in his introduction so rightly says—of so much that has been at the mercy of the peculiar demands of circumstance. Each story is radically different from the others in its immediate appeal, yet all are connected in a basic concern for the predicament of human beings in the face of huge political generalisations and of death.

On a purely practical level the Penguin book, since its literary merit is so high and so diverse, could perhaps best be used by the private student. Individual capacity for appreciation is often exasperated during group study, where it is irritating to have to stop and listen to others haggling over words and expressions and their translation.

The text of every one of the above books has been provided with stress-marks, and all are clearly printed on good paper, with the Heath and the Bradda publications outstanding. All except the Bradda books are paperbacks.

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*Russian Short Stories*. Selected by John Iwanik (Heath dist. Harrap. 215pp, 21/-).

*Hot Stone*. Short stories of Soviet Writers. (FLPH, 112pp. Available from Central Books).

*Russian Dramatic Reader*. C. S. Elston. (University of London Press, 48pp, 7/6).

*Shinel*, N. V. Gogol; *Kavkazski Plenniki*, L. N. Tolstoy; *Selected Stories*, I. A. Bunin. (Bradda Books, respectively 142, 78 and 192 pp., 7/-, 6/-, 7/6).

*Soviet Short Stories*. Ed. Richard Newnham. (Penguin Books—a Penguin Parallel Text. 224pp, 3/6).

# Books

## SILVER AGE OF LITERATURE

**From Chekhov to the Revolution: Russian Literature 1900-1917.** Marc Slonim. (OUP Galaxy Press. 253pp. 9/-.)

THIS NEW paperback consists of an exact reproduction of the first ten chapters of Professor Slonim's *Modern Russian Literature*, roughly the middle third of the two volumes, *The Epic of Russian Literature* (1950) and *Modern Russian Literature* (1953), which together constitute the best history of Russian literature in the English-speaking world. In them the author writes fully and interestingly on the main literary figures, and chronicles and comments on a host of minor writers and, most important, fills in the historical, social and political background—a background which almost always had, and still has, a direct influence on so much Russian literature.

The chapters in *From Chekhov to the Revolution* certainly share many of the merits of the whole work, combining solid information with illuminating insight. Professor Slonim writes fully and most competently on Chekhov, Gorky and Blok, and provides useful sketches of the work of many other figures, such as Saltykov-Schedrin, Leskov, Fet, Bunin, Kuprin, L. Andreev, Bely, etc. (altogether well over 100 literary personalities are discussed); he describes the literary movements of the period: realism, symbolism, acmeism, futurism and neo-realism. At the same time he fills in the general historical and intellectual background: one very good chapter is devoted to the populist movement, another is entitled 'Mystics, Philosophers and Marxists' (here, however, Professor Slonim, like so many others who use the word, unfortunately does not explain precisely what he means by mysticism). All in all, a vivid picture is painted of the silver age of Russian culture, that burst of intellectual activity in many fields during the last decades before World War I and the revolution.

On the other hand, these chapters do not make a completely satisfactory whole of themselves. Firstly, neither the title, *From Chekhov to the Revolution*, nor the sub-title, *Russian Literature 1900-1917*, accurately represents the scope of the book, which is in effect an outline of Russian literature from about 1870 to 1917, but minus Turgenev, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy—who had been treated in the concluding chapters of *The Epic of Russian Literature*. Secondly—and this is hardly surprising, since the last chapter in the present paperback was originally the middle chapter of a longer work—the book ends rather abruptly. It is a pity that Professor Slonim did not add a short conclusion,

tying together the loose ends and possibly looking a little into the future.

The material in *From Chekhov to the Revolution* is excellent, but it should have been more thoughtfully edited.

D. J. RICHARDS.

## TRAGIC BUT NECESSARY

**One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.** A. Solzhenitsyn, trs. Ralph Parker. (Gollancz. 192pp. 18/-.)

**Victims and Heroes.** K. Simonov, trs. R. Ainsztein. (Hutchinson. 558pp. 30/-.)

THESE ARE two books which make terrible but necessary reading for all friends of the Russian people and of the Soviet Union. The famous 'One Day . . .', which caused a nation-wide discussion and controversy on its appearance in the Soviet Union and a sensation in the West, appeared in *Soviet Literature*, No. 2, 1963, also translated by Ralph Parker. The present translation shows many small differences, and where I have checked these seem an improvement.

In under 200 pages the whole world of the labour camps is brought to life: the piercing cold, the bored cruelty of the guards, the camp rackets, the sense of a remote all-powerful injustice—'. . . no sooner had he finished one ten-year stretch than they gave him another . . .'. Nothing has been withheld, and it is the peculiar triumph of the book that it also presents the deepest of positive truths about human nature: the need for creative work, for comradeship, the will to live, or, if that has been made impossible, to survive at all costs. It is a book of bitter truth told without a trace of bitterness.

There has been considerable, sometimes rather narrow, literary discussion as to the success or otherwise of the form. The whole story is told, with admirable economy, from the point of view of the simple, but by no means unintelligent, Ivan Denisovitch, who does not ever ask himself any of the questions which torment the reader. He survives in the camps as he did as a peasant and soldier, from day to day. The chosen form has its strengths and its weaknesses. Ivan overhears a discussion on the film art of Eisenstein between a pair of imprisoned intellectuals. Real questions are posed (Eisenstein after all really existed and his art still does): does *Ivan the Terrible* justify or seek to sanctify Stalin's personal rule and thus make '. . . a mockery of three generations of the Russian intelligentsia . . .'? All this goes over the head of Ivan Denisovitch, who '. . . didn't



have the nerve to interrupt such a learned conversation . . . .

The book answers the question 'what was it like?' but deepens the torment of the question 'how could such things happen?'

It is this question, as applied to the early defeats of the Red Army in 1941, which Simonov sets out to answer. It would be difficult to imagine two books less alike in form. *Victims and Heroes* is conceived on the traditional grand scale and carried through with a near-faultless construction. This book was to Soviet war literature what the 20th Congress itself was to the general political scene. Through the complexities of a far-reaching panoramic plot the story is worked out in the fate of three main characters, Sintsov the young political commissar, the old Bolshevik General Serpilin, and Malinin the party official. The ultimate blame is shown to rest with Stalin himself and with the atmosphere built up in the country which made a virtue of suspicion. Very many of the book's 550-odd pages make painful reading, but with all that the basic reason why the Soviet people defeated the German invaders is brought out: their victory was a triumph of the human spirit.

D. C. WALLIS.

## ENCHANTED WANDERER

**Selected Tales:** Nikolai Leskov. Trs. David Magarshack. (Secker and Warburg. 300pp. 21/-.)

NIKOLAI LESKOV should be of particular interest to English readers. Unlike his great contemporaries, he had only the vaguest connection with the nobility, his father being a lesser civil servant. A mere 'commoner', unencumbered by aristocratic loyalties or the academic outlook of a university education, he knew the Russian people from their own level as human beings. His employment took him all over Russia, and the characters in his tales are peasants of the wide provinces as much as townfolk. Yet it was the English firm of Wilkins and Scott, for which he worked, and an English Quaker, his Aunt Polly, who brought him up and influenced his education. There is a detached objectivity in his writing, a simplicity, a journalism in his style reminiscent of Defoe. As I read David Magarshack's translation of *The Enchanted Wanderer* I found my own thoughts going to Robinson Crusoe's adventures in Grand Tartary and an old Victorian binding which probably stood on Aunt Polly's shelves. And in the tale of *The Left-handed Craftsman* the satirical but respectful references to the English as cunning and calculating merchants with immeasurable respect for the Treasury are as interesting as they are quaint.

The tales the translator has selected are typical examples of Leskov's major contribution to Russian literature—the *skaz*,

stories told in the first person so that the character and idiosyncrasies of the narrator shine clearly through the anecdote. Leskov's management of dialogue was real and effective, never stilted. Some of this achievement was due to his own re-creation of dialect, not reproducing actual speech but manufacturing an idiom to suit individual types and blend with the special atmosphere of each tale. David Magarshack has wisely refrained from attempting to reproduce this in English and has rendered Leskov's prose with sincere clarity. Sometimes so ice-cold is the style, so devoid of emotion the reporting, that one accepts the factual inevitability of suffering, and only when the whole plot is considered with its remorseless progress to conclusion does the human sympathy of Leskov become apparent. Characters, such as the prince who suddenly becomes a villain in *The Enchanted Wanderer*, may change without reason or emotional development, just as in news items from contemporary press reports, but the essential sympathy never deserts the theme. The supernatural which frequently drifts across the tales is symbolic of the darker subconscious rather than a main-spring of plot construction, and Leskov is too practical to relish suffering as a means of man's atonement. He was occupied with more positive things, though shadows of Dostoevsky are to be found in his writing—the glass-eating drunkard in *The Enchanted Wanderer* says, for instance: 'We, the possessed, suffer these things so that it shall be easier for the rest. And if you yourself be afflicted with some desire, do not wilfully abandon it lest another man pick it up and be tormented, but look for a man who would be willing to take upon himself this wickedness of yours.'

I found the most startling piece of writing in this collection not the revenge of the jealous murderess, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtensk District*, but that equivocating dialogue of acquiescence in *The Sentry*, where by holy conversation the bishop satisfies Battalion Commander Svinin that he has done moral good in having Private Postnikov flogged for saving a drowning man. How strange that literary controversy should result in Leskov writing the weak and reactionary novel *At Daggers Drawn*.

To read these translations is a stimulating experience. David Magarshack has used a colloquial fluency which retains much of the vivid detail of the original and there are little gems of description—such as of the gypsy: 'her eyebrow in line with the toe of her foot', and 'her fingers began to move over the strings of the guitar like wasps and to hum'; and when the wanderer talks of the steppes, so real to Leskov himself: 'For miles and miles the horizon stretched without a break: grass everywhere, feather grass, white and tufted, waving like a silver sea and scenting the air on the breeze; there was a smell of sheep, and the sun would be

blazing from a clear sky, burning, and wherever I looked there was no end to the steppe, just as there's no end to life's sorrows, and as there was no bottom to my heartache.'

STOWERS JOHNSON.

## POET OF TODAY

**Yevgenii Yevtushenko: Selected Poetry.** Ed. R. Milner-Gulland. (Pergamon Press, 176pp. 15/-.)

**M**R. R. MILNER-GULLAND, who in co-operation with Mr. Peter Levi produced the handy and valuable little Penguin booklet of some twenty of Yevtushenko's poems in an English rendering last year, has now produced a threefold more substantial and valuable volume of Yevtushenko's poems in the original Russian.

Taken together (all the poems in the minor work are to be found in the major one), these two books fill a very urgent need among those learning the Russian tongue and those speaking it. Since Yevtushenko's visit to this country in 1962 and the attendant publicity—which like much newspaper publicity was extremely superficial, even sensational, and in some cases downright stupid—there has been a great gap existing in the two fields which really matter, firstly the poems themselves and secondly the poet himself.

With Yevtushenko, as with his mentor Mayakovsky, the poetry is the man also. One must mention Mayakovsky, not to imply that Yevtushenko is a disciple of his—or of anyone else for that matter, for he has a distinctive and discursive style all of his own—but to put him 'in the picture' in Soviet literature, so to speak. What do we find in his poems? We find the poetry of a man with 'fire in his belly', the technique of a man with a cool, inquiring and experimental mind, and the commitment of a man in the pursuit of truth and sincerity.

This sometimes leads him into trouble with officialdom, and sometimes with his fellow writers. However, as those familiar with Soviet literary and artistic circles know, this does not make him a martyr. There is a good deal of general discussion and disagreement, sometimes acrimonious, in the Soviet Union, but this lends to a more lively public interest, and frequently to a raising of standards instead of the reverse. Also Yevtushenko is young, energetic and extremely hard-working, living in and on his poetry. He has an enormous backing among the younger generation, and his public recitals attract audiences of several thousands. He speaks already with the voice of the real poet, and his stature is still increasing.

It would be pointless to select poems for special mention on any literary grounds. There is, as Mr. Milner-Gulland rightly points out, something interesting, revealing and rewarding in each poem. All one can say, perhaps, is that in 'Zima Junction', his

chief work so far, we have the most interesting, revealing and rewarding poem of them all. It gives a detailed account of the poet's first visit to his birthplace in central Siberia, 100 miles or so from the shores of Lake Baikal. It reflects the outlook of the old and the new generations towards life around them, and shows us the poet answering their questions of life in Moscow, and also asking questions himself and sometimes finding no answer. 'Go, we shall be watching. Explore, travel, keep your eyes open. Love people. Remember us. Come back again.' 'I went,' says Yevtushenko, 'and I am still going!'

Not so pleasing is the printing of the table of contents on the outside back cover and inside back cover of the book. It would surely be more durable inside. Not so pleasing also is the condensed heavy face sans-serif type of the titles, which makes an incongruous contrast to the pleasant type face of the text. All the same, I would wish for this book the same fate as Yevtushenko's works in the Soviet Union—to be published in editions of 100,000, and to be sold out before they even reach the shops and bookstalls!

It is very interesting to note that the publishers were enterprising enough to get Yevtushenko to record some of his poems while he was here in England. These are available on an LP record in the larger music shops. Twelve poems are recorded, including the famous 'Babiy Yar', and the price is a reasonable two pounds.

WALTER MAY.

## THE PLAN CAUGHT IN PICTURES

**Time Forward!** (Iskusstvo, Moscow. 128pp., 108 plates. Unpriced.)

**H**ERE IS a book containing photographs of the seven-year plan in action, taken from the Second All-Union Art Photography Exhibition, compiled specially on this great subject. Pictures by both professional and amateur photographers from many different republics are included, and the subjects are very widespread indeed. They include agriculture, industry, shipping, leisure, human touches (a little bird on the finger of a steel worker), night shots, people, astronauts, ice and snow, children, sport, flying, and nature study.

My outstanding impression is of the atmosphere conveyed so successfully in many of these pictures. Anyone can be taught to take a photograph that will be technically good and even well composed. But what so often makes photography an art is the introduction of atmosphere, not just a bit of mist in the background, not necessarily atmosphere in the literal sense, but some feeling that brings a picture alive and makes it more than a mere record. This, I feel, has been done extremely well by many of these Soviet photographers. What a far cry from the

early Soviet photography, good though much of that was at the time! These pictures would stand up among those from any country in the world.

To see what I mean, compare picture No. 4, showing Mr. Khrushchov with the astronauts on the Lenin Mausoleum—an excellent record shot of an historical occasion—with No. 9, a beautiful double-page spread of Moscow seen through a screen of spring blossom. Or compare it with the colour picture No. 14, an industrial scene at dusk or dawn, with chimney stacks and lights and smoke. What a difference the industrial background makes to No. 15, too, of a sailor being shown where he is to work. The picture tells its own story; it hardly needs a caption.

No. 19 is a dramatic industrial scene, an excellent example of the repetition of design used to create a work of art. Two other pictures making skilful use of atmosphere are Nos. 34 and 35, the former showing a girl concrete worker, placed well to the left, with cranes on a new dam very much out of focus filling in the rest of the space. No. 35 shows a group of men gathered round a fire out of doors on an intensely cold day, again with cranes behind them.

The colour shot No. 60, of birch trees (why does the title say merely 'A birch tree'?) is full of the atmosphere of the woods in the autumn. No. 61, opposite, entitled 'Moscow Nights', conveys admirably the atmosphere of a Soviet 'Prom'. No. 63, called just 'Cattle', makes full use of reflections and a misty morning, with a large birch tree providing the strong point. No. 65, 'A Young Shepherd', is another lovely version of the same theme.

Sport is dramatically shown in Nos. 75 ('A Motor Race'), 76 (of a cyclist), and 77 ('Steeplechase'). But perhaps the best sport picture is No. 78, called for some reason 'Vast Expanses', of a boat-load of girls pulling hard on the oars. 'Delayed Jump' is a glorious shot of two parachutists plunging through space, arms and legs spread out.

Soviet photographers are very good at capturing spontaneous and natural facial expressions. There are numerous examples in this book—Nos. 20, 22, 24, 34, 42 ('The Decisive Move'—a splendid one this), 78, 102 and 106 (children watching a village wedding through a window).

Reproduction of the colour pictures is a little disappointing, particularly Nos. 23, 29, 55 and 62. But others are much better, especially Nos. 14 and 60, already commented upon, and Nos. 57 and 25 (a splendid study of a steelworks).

Altogether this is a most welcome book of Soviet photography. It shows great imagination and undoubted skill in many different

ways. Let us have more of such books from the USSR.

J. ALLAN CASH.

## WHAT'S COOKING

*Cooking the Russian Way.* Beryl Gould-Marks. (Harrap. 128pp. 10/6.)

THE RECIPES in this little book can well be recommended to anyone wishing to add a Russian touch to a party or a meal. Directions given for each recipe are clear and easy to follow, and the ingredients can easily be obtained at any large delicatessen. The sour cream—*smetana*—can generally be bought in cardboard containers, but here I disagree with the author that it can be replaced with yoghurt. It is, of course, better than nothing, but its consistency is too watery when heated. Salted cucumbers and *tvorog*, which is a dry cottage cheese, can also generally be found in continental stores.

The book gives a good deal of useful information as to the way things are eaten—*zakouski*, soups and meat—and very good descriptions of the various types of caviar and vodka. A fairly good-sized jar of red caviar can be bought for about 7/6, if one wants something really impressive, and many Russians actually prefer it to the more refined black.

Sucking pig, caviar and sturgeon are not the items a housewife generally buys in the local market, but the author has given alternatives which can be enjoyed as 'mock' caviar made out of vegetables.

One or two recipes tend to be rather elaborate—that for *Guryevskaya kasha* (p. 108), for instance. In an everyday Russian cookery book there is no mention of baking the milk and removing the skin carefully to use between the layers of semolina! Also, the recipe on page 59 called *Bitok* is not what a Russian would expect to receive if ordering it in a restaurant. *Bitki* or *bitochki* are the meat balls described on page 18, but usually served in sour cream and with mashed potatoes. One other difference between this and the usual Russian cookery book is that the Russians use brandy, while here rum is generally specified.

This book is admittedly compiled from *émigré* cooking, and it would obviously be useless to look for 'berries à la Romanoff' or 'hussar's roast' on your Moscow menu. It should also be noted that Russians try to have fresh dill available during the summer months, using it finely chopped to sprinkle over salads, soups and meat dishes. Fresh dill gives a specific flavour that dill seeds cannot reproduce.

Apart from these very minor criticisms and suggestions, this is a book certainly worth having in a gastronomic library.

SOFKA SKIPWITH.

## PRESS CONFERENCE

THIS poem, from Robert Rozhdestvensky's American Notebook, was published in *Pravda* on December 25, 1963, and describes the poet's impressions of a press conference with American journalists. The editors of the *Anglo-Soviet Journal* invite readers and students of Russian to submit English translations of the poem. Book prizes will be given for the three translations judged the best by the Editorial Committee.

Роберт РОЖДЕСТВЕНСКИЙ

# Пресс-конференция

(Из американского блокнота)

Ну, начинайте!  
Мы и так запаздываем.  
От дыма  
в зале грозно и темно...  
Чего молчите!  
Ведь у вас за пазухой,  
Наверно,  
кое-что припасено!..  
Кто будет первым!  
По какому знаку  
вы ринетесь,—  
щучье и караси!..  
Эй ты, плешивенький!  
Спроси про Пастернака!  
Я ж вижу, как ты  
ёрзаешь,—  
спроси!

А ты,  
сидящий с краю,  
лупсик розовенький,  
о Сталине спроси.  
Спроси зловеще.  
Тебе ж не больно  
задавать вопросыки.  
Мне  
больно  
отвечать.  
Но я отвечу.  
Я встану в рост.  
И я скажу о культе.  
Не для тебя,  
а для других  
людей...

Не радуйся!  
Сенсации  
не будет.  
Не жди.  
И понапрасну  
не потей!..  
Сейчас вы загадите,  
задымитесь,  
оставите  
добрососедский тон...  
Чего же вы блокнот  
закрыли,  
миссис!

Вам мой ответ  
не нравится!  
Пardon!..  
Увы,—  
я остаюсь  
самим собою...  
Эй, дядя!  
Потянись к карандашу.  
А ну-ка, шлёпни  
тонкою  
губою,—  
спроси,  
по чьей указке  
я  
пишу!  
Скажи, что не свободен я,  
что будто  
твоя газетка  
целиком  
права...  
О, как мне сладко  
вмазывать  
по букве  
в твой лобик  
неуютные слова.  
Чтоб вздрогнул,  
чтоб взорвался зал  
от хохота,  
чтоб ты под креслами  
нашаривал очки...  
А через миг  
вновь станет  
очень холодно.  
И сузятся  
недобрые зрачки...  
Опять вопрос.  
И снова —  
мимо  
камень.  
И сухо шелестит  
бумажный ворох...  
И щелканье  
затворов фотокамер,  
как будто лязг  
винтовочных  
затворов.

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